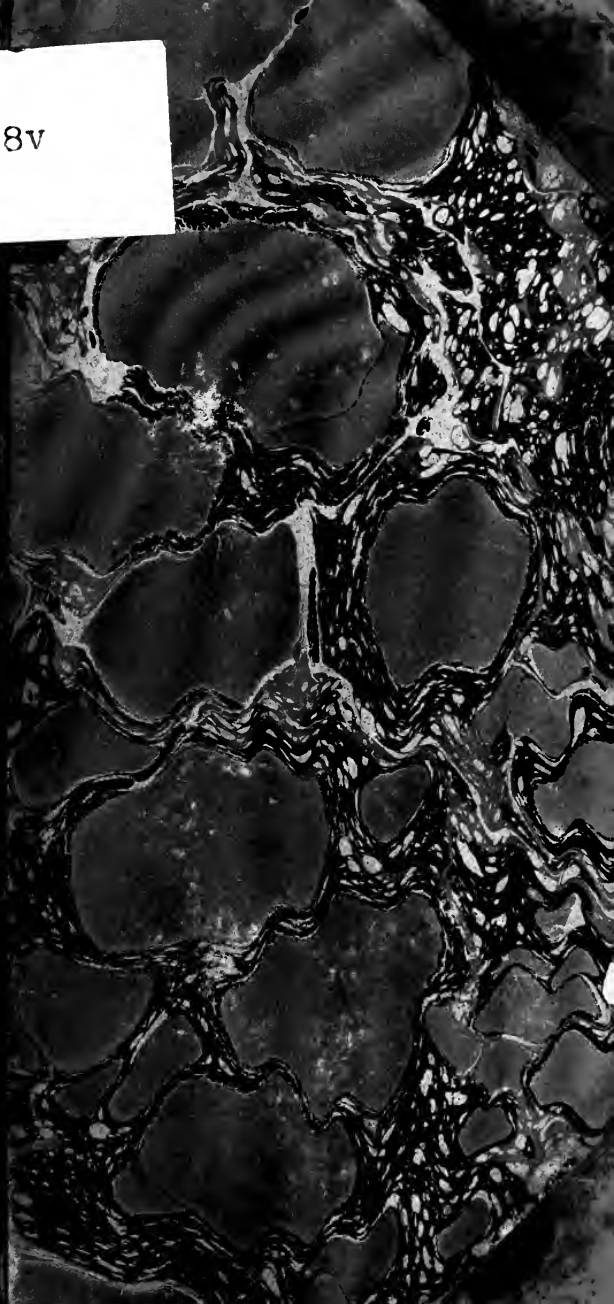


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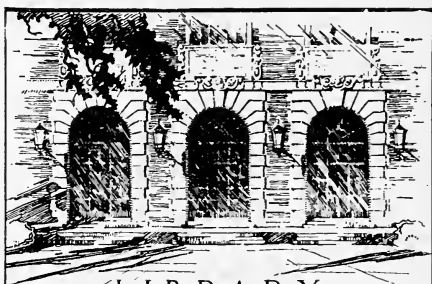
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VILLAGE ANECDOTES;

OR,

Lepidus Magna

THE JOURNAL OF A YEAR, 1835

X.L.

FROM

SOPHIA TO EDWARD.

Phillips

WITH

ORIGINAL POEMS.

By MRS. LE NOIR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON,

PRINTED FOR VERNOR AND HOOD, 31, POULTRY,

By A. Wilson, Wild Court, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

1804.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Editor solicits the indulgence of the Reader to the List of Errata at the end of this work, and is bound in justice to acknowledge that they are not to be imputed to the Author : Her distant residence precluded her from examining the proof-sheets ; and consequently, she is not responsible for any errors that have arisen during the progress of her work through the press.—The Editor and Printer, at the same time, think themselves entitled to some indulgence. Being but little acquainted with the Lady's hand-writing, they found it extremely difficult to decypher ; and were at too great a distance to consult her. In numerous instances, they were obliged to guess at her meaning, and even to make one.—This plain statement of the matter will account for most of the Errata of these volumes.

The

The Novel was read over in MS. by a Gentleman of taste and learning, who spoke of it in terms of great approbation. The good opinion which the Editor entertained of that Gentleman's judgment, and the reasons which he had for thinking favourably of the Author, prevailed upon him to undertake the office of Corrector of the Press, from a MS. written in the Author's worst manner. He has taken no other liberty with the Work, than to suppress or change the names of places and persons; the recent date of the events related rendering this precaution necessary.—For the opinions, therefore, and principles contained in it—for its merits and demerits, whatever these may be—the Writer only is responsible. The Editor will not attempt to forestall the public judgment; but, being now brought to a close, he must add, that if the pleasure derived by the reader of these volumes should equal what he has himself received, it will be very considerable.

VILLAGE ANECDOTES.

SOPHIA TO EDWARD.

To Mr. Willars.

M——, August 25, 179

I AM so far safe arrived, my ever dear Edward; and, while I am waiting for the friends, who are to meet me here, and conduct me to my retirement, I have the unexpected good fortune of meeting with a gentleman going to P——, who engages to deliver to you this little billet (if the winds allow it.) I write in haste while he dines; a thousand tender thoughts crowd on my mind so fast, that they efface one

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another — and could I write them, my tears would go near to efface them all! — This, then, is the last of my writing, which for many, many months, is likely to reach you. The wind is veering: alas! even this you may not receive. — My letter is called for. — The bearer will assure you of my health:

Heaven preserve, through all his perils,
my dearest failor! So prays unceasingly his
faithful, affectionate

SOPHIA.

Southlands, Friday, Aug. 26.

Seven in the morning.

My dearest Edward is beginning his journal as he promised; and at this distance we have still the satisfaction of conversing together. — How fares it with my love? — Have you received my little billet? — Have

—Have you failed?—To these fond questions I must suppose answers.—While I relate what, alas! you may never never read.—Forgive this prattle, oh my heart's dear master; it relieves me.—Now then to my journal. Mr. Peterfon arrived at the inn soon after I had dispatched my letter, with one of his daughters, a very pretty young woman, to bear me company; an attention which much obliged me.

We reached this place before dark, where I was received by Mrs. Peterfon, another daughter, and a son, with great cordiality. I shall introduce all the family to you in due time; but till I know them a little more particularly myself, I will not hazard remarks. I retired early to rest, and, thanks to fatigue, have slept well.—But your journey yesterday, your company in the coach? Methinks I hear you say—Well, my love, you shall have it all.

Our company consisted of a lady and her child, a boy about four years of age; a female quaker, rather precise, but very good natured; a raw young Welshman, who informed us he was going to take the diversions of the field on his native mountains; and a pleasant, genteel, middle-aged man, who neither let us into the light of his profession nor of his pursuits: he, however, made no secret of his principles, which, like all of the republican class, he was ever ready to force into notice, with or without introduction. You may believe we had some smart disputes; and I was rather out of humour with him, when a little incident that occurred, after dinner, settled him high in my esteem, notwithstanding the difference of our opinions. Our hasty meal dispatched, the young Welshman disappeared, and did not return till we were all taking our places in the coach: he apologized for his absence, and with much embarrassment related the cause;

cause ; he had been to offer a bill for payment in the town, which, on account of some informality, was refused : what was to be done ? He was without resource, in a strange place, and the waiter stood gaping for his unpaid reckoning. The poor youth was hesitating at the coach door, in a state of distress, which I leave you to imagine, when our democrat having asked him a few questions, stepped out and took him aside ; their conference was not long ; the youth returned, stepped lightly into the coach, and the waiter vanished. Nothing was said in explanation ; but, in the course of the journey, the young man enquired the gentleman's address in town : this was, however, sufficient, and I could not but be interested for a man who, with such generous readiness, stepped in to the assistance of a person, with whose connections it clearly appeared he was unacquainted.—Was it not noble, my dear Edward, and like a generous tar ? Yet I

believe he was not of that profession, though so eminently worthy to be so. He was well-bred, well-informed, and entertaining—I am sorry he is a republican, and so I told him. I could have told him much more; but the remembrance of the tales I could relate freeze my blood; and it is with the utmost reluctance that I speak of them. It was to this gentleman I was obliged for an opportunity of conveying the little billet, which I hope you have received; a friend of his was the messenger—Of him you may possibly gather some intelligence.—You see I fancy myself talking to you—and that you can guess I wished to hear who is the proprietor of so worthy a character.—I forget you cannot know that he interests your wife.—Nothing further occurred worth relating. My journey, upon the whole, was as pleasant as, circumstances considered, it could be, and we fared very tolerably at the inns.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear Edward! I leave you, to dress for dinner—We keep early hours; a custom to which I conform with great satisfaction.

Thursday morning, Aug. 27.

I have had a little time to look about me, my dear Edward, and can now make you acquainted with the sort of situation of my new abode. Mrs. L.'s account was tolerably accurate, when she recommended it as a comfortable retreat for me during your absence; but I shall be more particular.

The house, which is very old, and rather vast than commodious, is agreeably situated on the side of a hill, well sheltered from the cold winds, and commanding a rich, though not very extensive view. My apartment is exactly in the

B 4

centre;

centre; the windows project, not in the modern form of a bow, but in the very antique one of a square. The front overlooks the garden, which runs with a gentle slope, and is bounded by woods which cover the hill. From one side there is an opening to the country, whence peeps the village spire, and the chimnies of an old mansion-house, between the trees. The opposite commands a green lane, the direct road to the house, whence I can descry all passengers. My room is large, and being esteemed the pleasantest in the house, was, on that account, allotted to me: it is rather distant from the rest of the family; but Mrs. Peterfon tells me she is in expectation of a further addition to it, a young person who is her husband's niece and ward. She lost both her parents early, and is now coming to reside entirely with her uncle's family.—She is to occupy the room which joins to mine, and then Mrs. P. says she hopes I shall
not

not find it so *naked*. What I have seen of the walks about are very pleasant ; the air is good, and the neighbourhood, I hear, consisting chiefly of farmers and graziers, in good circumstances, and much upon a par, very sociable. There is nobody but servants at the great house ; the owner is a bachelor, and hardly ever resides there. As for our family, they appear united and obliging, and every thing that in my Edward's absence I can desire, is to my wish. They call to breakfast.—Adieu, my love ! I have a deal of business ; as yet I have settled nothing in its proper place : these necessary arrangements, and a walk, will probably occupy me all day, and prevent my writing, even though I had more to say, than to repeat assurances of tenderness and unalterable regard, which it is sweet to repeat, although they were never called in question.

Friday, 28.

I walked yesterday with the Miss Peter-sons to the church I see from my window, and around the deserted mansion-house—where

“Thick weeds around th’ untrodden courts arise.”

If the house is deserted, the groves are, however, well inhabited—I never saw such thriving colonies of rooks before.—Opposite the mansion-house, and within the walls of the church-yard, is the parsonage; a neat rural abode—The casement windows are half concealed with vines intermixed with honeysuckles—Under the projecting cornice of the first and only story, the swallows have found such religious sanctuary, that I counted no less than thirty nests in a row. We peeped over the quickset hedge to admire the flower garden, which is still very gay as well

well as very neat; in short, the whole of this little retreat was so much to my taste, conveying such ideas of quiet, comfort, and seclusion, that I was concerned, from downright selfishness, to hear that the incumbent was old, infirm, and unsociable; he neither goes out nor receives company; the duty is chiefly done by a young man, for whom Southlands being too dull, he resides chiefly at M——, the next market town. Casting a look towards the church spire on our return, methought the weather-cock pointed fair for your departure; I breathed a silent, fervent prayer for my Edward's safety! and from that moment passed without noticing whatever was pointed out to my observation; my whole soul was with my love. I saw the sails ascend, the pilot take his station, the vessel plough the deep.—I heard the confused shouts of the seamen, and could distinguish from the rest my Edward's voice, bidding a long adieu to Sophia and his native land!

Some flanzas occurred to me, written several years ago, on seeing a ship sail from Dover. On my return, I returned to my apartment, and diverted my melancholy by committing them to paper. To-morrow I will transcribe them fair, to convince my Edward that a seaman's life always interested me: I knew not then the worthiest of them, or perhaps the 5th verse had been omitted.

Saturday, 29.

ON SEEING A VESSEL SAIL.

Yon ship prepar'd the port to leave,
Her canvas swells, her anchors heave,

She courts the fav'ring gale:

Her jovial crew, her rudder's guide,

Wait but the slowly-rising tide

To spread their vent'rous sail.

Oh! wond'rous proof of bold design,

Of art that's only not divine,

Say, whither art thou bound?

What barb'rous coast, what hostile shore,

What distant world wilt thou explore,

What unplough'd ocean found?

Whom

Whom does thy spacious hold contain?

Sons for whom mothers weep in vain,

The father torn from home;

(While sisters hope to stay the tears

Of their last parent's widow'd years,)

In thee, alas! may roam.

Some truant youth in thee may part;

The sov'reign of a virgin heart,

That beats for him alone,

Whose plighted vows of endless love;

She never doubts will faithful prove;

Still judging from her own.

Tell not the fond, confiding maid,

How oft her trust will be betray'd,

How oft the youth forsworn.

Wound not her unsuspecting breast,

In fancy's sweet illusion blest,

And absence may be borne.

Be thou, kind Heaven, the vessel's guide!

For her the whelming waves divide,

The stormy winds controul,

Whither she steer her devious way

To distant India's fervent day,

Or seek the frozen pole.

Yet, dost thou in thy wrath ordain

That the fair fabrick ne'er again

Shall bear her wand'ers home?

If, given to the greedy sides,

The storm must rend her parting sides,

And ruin be her doom:

Spare in thine ire, her gallant crew,
Spare in their lives their children's too,

The mother, and the wife :
The troubled deep awhile assuage,
Speak, and appease the fearful rage
Of elemental strife.

From fell Arabia's barren strands
Her ruthless sons, her burning sands,

The vessel far convey ;
Nor let the hapless crew be thrown
Where gen'rous pity is unknown,
Or monsters howl for prey.

Their tedious toils and travels o'er,
May Albion's snow-white cliffs once more

The weary wand'ers gain.
And each, his dangers at an end,
Recount them to the wond'ring friend,
With joy enhanc'd by former pain.

Sunday, Aug. 30.

We are preparing for a long walk to attend divine service—I shall pray for my Edward—for the present, adieu !

Monday,

Monday, 31.

I was prevented writing yesterday evening, my dear Edward ; for we had company to tea ; and I can, in consequence, introduce you to some of our neighbours. Mr. Figgins is a wealthy dealer in cattle, corn and flour, who lives about two miles from hence : he has a numerous family ; but brought with him, in his one-horse chair, only his two eldest daughters—very shewy, gay young women, and drest in the pink of the mode. There were, besides, two young men, of the name of Bertram, who rent the largest farm in the village, have a pretty estate of their own, and are of no small consequence here : their appearance was strikingly contrasted to that of the young women—as plain and simple, as the latter's was fashionable and gay : their manners, too, were as unlike as their drefs. Could a stranger possibly take them to be of the same class ? The women, correct, de-

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cent, and agreeable; the men, coarse, unbred, I had almost said insupportable.— Whence arises this difference, my Edward, in the two sexes, in the middle walk of life? for it is general enough, and by no means confined to Southlands. Why are the women so infinitely superior in style and polish to the men? Is it, because the education of all who have any education, is nearly the same?— that the farmer's and the tradesman's daughters are brought up almost on the same plan with the gentleman's, learn the same things, and are only taught, and that not always, by less eminent masters? While the sons, bred wholly to business, give themselves up to it, or, to pursue diversions, neglect all exterior polish, and are different beings from their superiors in high life? Is it the manner of living so much asunder? Is it nature, or custom? What is it, Edward? The fact is certain. The conversation of the gentlemen turned chiefly on the sports of the field, which are so soon to take place.

I heard

I heard much interesting discussions on dogs and horses; of vengeance against poachers, and plots against hares and partridges: at length, they went to visit the stables and kennels, and left us females to an uninterrupted debate on fashions; on which topic Miss Jane Figgins, who is just arrived from the county town of C—— was the oracle: we had much to do to examine new modes and request patterns. The gentlemen were engaged to dine here with other company on the 1st of September, and to-day we are all in a bustle of preparation. Mrs. Peterson is giving orders for the slaughter of poultry in her kitchen; the young ladies are making tarts, jellies, and custards, and the labours of the toilet are not neglected. So many smart young men, I hear, are coming, all of them in good circumstances, and eligible for husbands, and only our two young ladies to set their caps at them. Sure we shall have some execution—will you judge of their pretensions?

pretensions? Miss P——, the eldest, aged about twenty, is esteemed a beauty here, and would be a very pretty girl any where. Her skin is beautifully clear, with a great deal of the rose; her eyes very bright, and her other features regular, if not fine; she is middle sized, and tolerably well-shaped; lively, I had almost said, a little bold. Miss Anne, the youngest, is taller and thinner than her sister; has large eyes, less bright, but more expressive than hers; a pale complexion, and is, upon the whole, a delicate and pretty-looking girl. Her manners are gentle and insinuating; a little flattering sometimes, but I believe it is natural to her, and that she means nothing less than art. From what I have said, you will allow they have charms, and that our pastoral beaux are exposed to some danger.

Tuesday,

Tuesday, Sept. 1.

I have just received your letter, my dear Edward; it has unfitted me for writing—You have then failed—alas! when shall I hear from you again.

Wednesday, Sept. 2.

I ought to be thankful, my dear Edward, for the pleasure I enjoyed yesterday, and I feel repining that I cannot hope for a repetition of it; yet ships sometimes pass you—you *may* touch at land, and sure you will not lose an opportunity of quieting your anxious Sophia's fears.

Some of the noisy party who slept here last night, rose early to pursue their sport this morning. I was not stirring, and saw nothing of them. The company of yesterday were the two Mr. Bertrams, already mentioned;

mentioned ; two brothers of the Miss Fig-gins's, much better bred than the rest of the company ; a Mr. Grove, a tall, dark man, with manners infinitely disgusting ; his younger brother, more personable and agreeable ; these gentlemen live but a short mile from hence, and often call : and a little brisk fellow named Deacon, who took it into his head to be extremely attentive and troublesome to me. We dined at rather a late hour for the accommodation of the sportsmen, who brought home a few birds and very keen appetites. Our ladies took care to fill their plates, and they themselves did not omit to fill their glasses ; we left them, soon after the cloth was removed, in high glee.

The wind being a little troublesome, Miss Peterfons were afraid to run the risk of incommoding their head dresses by exposing themselves to it. I had no such apprehensions, and am besides rather apt
to

to gather spirits from a refreshing gale. I strolled out attended only by your faithful sailor, who is my constant companion. —I found the weather very pleasant, and prolonged my walk, almost unconsciously, over some grounds which brought me to a wild common ; this spot is most agreeably diversified ;—the ground is uneven ; there is wood and water, and, to use the language of improvers, it has great capabilities.—I saw neither hovel nor human creature, and felt as if it was all my own. I was leaning over a gate to admire a very beautiful view of the country, which it afforded me through a break in the trees, when a loud bark of my guard and companion directed my eye to the side of the hedge, where the apparition of a tall thin man, slowly advancing, caused me some surprize : I turned rather hastily, I believe, and perhaps startled ; for the person, who was now within hearing, begged me not to be alarmed or to hurry ; —“ No lady has any thing

thing to fear from me, madam," said he, "nor indeed any human creature; I am very harmless, I assure you." This said, he bowed with a grace not very common in these parts, and pursued his walk. As he passed me, I had leisure to observe him; he seemed about thirty, of an interesting melancholy countenance; his appearance genteel, though negligent, and a book in his hand. I could have excused this rencounter, my dear Edward, which will spoil the solitary rambles from which I had promised myself so much pleasure, when I took possession of my common, little dreaming it was already tenanted.—This solitary wanderer, what can he be? Has he, like me, lost a beloved companion?—Is he unhappy, or only of a romantic turn?—

" From better habitation spurn'd,
" Reluctant dost thou rove,
" Or grieve for friendship unreturn'd,
" Or unregarded love?"—

On

—On my return home, I found the family waiting tea, and related my adventure.—
“As sure as can be, mama,” said Miss Peterfon, “Mrs. Willars has met the melancholy gentleman :”—“You then know him!” said I. “Oh no, indeed,” returned she, “nobody knows any thing about him here ; he has lodged about two months at farmer Clarke’s, the other side of the common : they say he is mad ; but you need not have been afraid of him ; he never hurts any body.” As she was yet speaking, the younger Mr. Grove, his complexion much heightened, entered the room ; he drew his chair as close to her as possible, seized her hand, and lamented most pathetically his long absence from her.—
When acquainted with the subject of our discourse, he informed us that the odd man’s name was Ewer, that he had dropt from the moon, and might therefore very reasonably be taken for a lunatic, and that nobody knew, and every body wondered
what

what he did here ; his brother now making his appearance, he called to him—" Will, we were just talking of Mrs. Clarke's lodger, and a thought strikes me that he is certainly come against the sporting season."—" I fancy not," replied the elder brother; " I met him fishing a few days ago, and had some talk with him ; the man seemed clear enough in his senses, and told me angling was the only diversion he took. For my part, I am convinced, by all I can gather, that he has absconded for debt." The remainder of the party were by this time assembled, and I could hear nothing more, for every body spoke at once. The elder Mr. Peterfon seated himself by me ; assured me that had I been his wife, he never would have left me, wondered how I could marry a seamen, and said a great many other fine things, which were unluckily interrupted by a squabble between Mr. I. Grove and the Figgins's, who should hand the toast, neither

neither party would give up, and the plate was fairly overset in the contest, to the great benefit of my friend, Sailor, who does not always fare so well as I could wish, though I sometimes spare him part of my dinner. The clatter was over without further mischief, which, considering that the gentlemen, though they could hardly stand, were not to be prevailed upon to sit still, and were perpetually running against an awkward servant handing the tea, was very fortunate; I thought to have stolen off to my apartment and my Edward soon after, but failed in the attempt.—Mr. Deacon detained me by absolute force, and insisted on being my partner at whist. The card tables were now arranged, and I was placed with him against Mr. Grove and the elder Mr. Peterson; the former of these, who plays a tolerable game, criticised his partner in his sarcastic way, who paid no regard to him, but as constantly praised himself; I

must say with rather less reason ; but he has so high an opinion of his own abilities in every thing, that he is always satisfied with his own performances, though they succeed ever so ill ; and all the world could not put him out of conceit of them. My sweet partner kept winking at me, I suppose to keep his eyes open, and we presently lost two rubbers. I now begged leave to retire, and at length prevailed ; though Mr. Peterfon, who thought I was only weary of losing, offered by way of encouragement to play with me himself, which he hinted was insuring me success. I was, however, proof against his solicitations, and Mr. Grove politely observed, that he supposed it would be of no use to press me, as, like all other women, I should only be the more perverse. Mrs. Peterfon took my place, and I retired to my room with a head-ach, which disabled me from writing. The company staid supper, and drank and sung till a very late hour ;

hour; luckily for me the situation of my apartment secured me from being disturbed by their noise. Mr. Peterfon senior returned to dinner to-day, at the usual hour, without any birds; he is not, it seems, a keen sportsman. My neighbour is expected this evening. Adieu.

Thursday, Sept. 3.

Miss Harriet Peterfon, the young person we have been expecting, arrived here late yesterday evening; she was escorted by a relation of her mother's, a hearty, jolly looking man, and very much of a farmer, at whose house she has spent the last two years. "I have brought you my little cousin Peterfon," said he, "for my wench has just picked her up a husband, and I am a little inclined to matrimony myself; mayhap the young woman might

not like my choice, as she has been my servant like, though Betty's a very good sort of a body : So I thought it best to bring her to you, cousin ; where she will have companions of her own age." Miss Peterfons, who have not seen their relation for several years, eyed her pretty face and improved stature a little askance ; but upon the whole received her very affectionately. Her uncle could hardly be prevailed upon to stay breakfast this morning, though the hour was much advanced ; so impatient was he to see his Betty. He gave his niece a hearty smack at parting, begging leave to take the same liberty all round, saying it was his country custom. He then recommended to Miss Harriet to be good and dutiful, as she had always been to him ; she answered only with tears, and followed him to his chaise affectionately assiduous to see that he was accommodated with every thing he might stand in need of on his journey. " That's my
good

good girl," said he, tossing off a parting glass. "Ah, cousin Peterfon, I shall dearly miss her." Harriet stood looking after him, much longer than she could see him, and then wept outright: I took her arm in mine and led her into the garden; where, after a short interval of silence, I said,—“Your grief is very amiable, Miss Harriet; but do not indulge it too much, lest it should appear like regretting your new situation; I hope you will find friends here, who will supply the place of those you have left.” “I do not doubt it, Madam,” said she, sobbing, —“but my uncle, with all his roughness, has the best heart in the world; I grieve to think on the step he is going to take; I am afraid he will repent it.—Oh, that Betty! it was she that drove my cousin to a marriage no way fit for her, and to a home she could not offer me to share. I know it was she persuaded my uncle to bring me here; poor dear man, she leads him as she pleases.”

I had nothing to say to remove fears so well grounded, and could only endeavour to direct her attention from dwelling upon them : in this I succeeded ; she is at that happy age when our tears quickly dry : after an hour's walk I led her back to the company cheerful and recovered.

Friday, Sept. 4.

Harriet Peterson, now settled my next door neighbour, is in her eighteenth year ; she is neither so short as her eldest cousin, nor so tall as the younger, but she has a more expressive countenance, and is more interesting than either of them. Her dress is not at all fashionable, and her timid air and look still less so. The first of these defects her cousins are already preparing to do away ; the latter appears so much her native disposition, that I doubt if the air of Westminster could remove it, how much less

less that of Southlands. When her mother died, she was conducted by a maiden aunt of hers, who resided at Boulogne, to a convent there ; after a few years this relation also dying, she was removed to the uncle's, who lately deposited her here ; he lives on his own estate in a remote part of Shropshire, and she has been used to see so little company, that even Southlands must appear gay to her. You will say I am in haste to form a judgment, when I tell you I think her very amiable ; she is at least to me very prepossessing. Her timidity has nothing in it *farouche*, or forbidding ;

C'est cette Pudeur douce, innocente, enfantine,
Qui colore le front avec rouge divine :

'Tis that sweet coyness, innocently shy,
That tints the forehead with roseate dye :

and her features, when she speaks, which is not so often as one could wish indeed, are so expressive of a sweet temper and a guileless heart, that I cannot but believe them.

Adieu my love ! do not be jealous if I leave you to join my new acquaintance and neighbour in a walk.

Saturday, Sept. 30.

As we were yesterday chatting after dinner, Miss Harriet's early loss of her mother having been mentioned, I proposed to her to adopt her for my daughter, provided she would be very dutiful ; she promised to be very affectionate, and we are agreed. Mr. Peterson advised me to send for my husband from sea, or get another, and have children of my own ; for it was a great chance, he said, if you do not get another wife. His son assured me, that if you stay away seven years I have a right to marry again, and was of opinion that the term ought to be altered to months : I affected to laugh, my dear Edward ; but every thing that reminds me of the probability of your
being

being long absent, of the impossibility of my hearing from you often, rends my heart; and I sometimes find it difficult to restrain my tears.

Sunday, Sept. 6.

Miss Peterson has undertaken the superintendence of her cousin's toilet; yesterday her sister likewise contributed her aid, that so rustic an appearance might not disgrace them on Sunday. Her fine natural ringlets are tortured into a form of more taste, her hat cut less, and adorned with more ribbons; and her shocking, long, and slender waist so disguised, that she approaches as near to the fashionable breadth and rotundity of shoulders as it is possible for so easy and good a shape to do. She suffers them to distort her as they please; and only when they tell her of the improve-

ment of her appearance, and desire her to look at it in the glass, turns aside, as from a sight no ways agreeable to her. Miss Peterfons wonder I am not more fashionable; I excuse myself on the score of your absence. I thought, my Edward, that at a farm-house, in a remote village, one hundred and fifty miles from the capital, I should, at least, have had the liberty to have been as unfashionable as I chose: but luxury treads on the heels of wealth, and has penetrated even here. Not that I have any intention of affecting singularity; I like to follow Madam Fashion at a modest, or social distance; avoiding to be either first or last in her train, as well as all extremes, eminently extravagant or inconvenient: I do not choose to wear a hat that will not shade me from the weather; because I love air and exercise for my own sake, and my complexion for my Edward's. Yesterday Harriet, encouraged by my example,

ample,

ample, absolutely refused to have her straw hat cut and spoiled, in spite of her cousin's displeasure and remonstrances.

Monday, Sept. 7.

Miss Peterfons do not love walking for its own sake; they will go on foot three, or even four miles, if it is to pay a visit, but detest a stroll that has no object but the enjoyment of air and exercise. Miss Peterfon says, she can find no pleasure in rambling over a dreary common, to be blowed about and tanned like a gipsy: nor yet in clambering stiles, over dewy corn fields, where you never meet a human creature of the least decent appearance. A walk on the parade at M—, when there are soldiers quartered in town, is something like: the band plays every evening, and you are sure to meet genteel company: there's no occasion to go from home to see

green trees, and corn fields, and sheep and cows, and clowns ; there are always plenty within sight of the windows. Happily for me Miss Harriet is not of the same way of thinking ; she enjoys a walk, and is always happy to bear me company. Accustomed to solitude, she is more alarmed than pleased, if by chance we meet with any thing human in our rambles. The Miss Petersons have reason to be as well pleased as I am with this difference of taste in their cousin, as it releases them from a constraint which sometimes their complaisance imposed on them. Harriet and I tie on our straw hats with handkerchiefs, and with each a stick and Sailor to defend us, sally forth, fearless of winds and weather.

Wednesday,

Wednesday, Sept. 9.

I am just returned, my love, from a very pleasant stroll to the common I have heretofore mentioned; but which I had not ventured since to visit alone: with a companion there could be no impropriety, even though chance had again conducted thither, at the same hour, the person I formerly met. No one, however, came to interrupt us; and we seated ourselves under the shade of a group of aged oaks, its venerable inhabitants,—

“ Who, as they bow their hoary heads, relate,

“ In murm’ring sounds, the dark decrees of fate:

“ While visions, as poetic eyes avow,

“ Cling to each leaf, and swarm on ev’ry bough.”

A gentle breeze that whispered among the branches, and the solitary situation, brought these lines, of Gray to my recollection: I repeated them to my companion; who entered so much into their spirit,

spirit, that she seemed fearful, as well as I, of interrupting, by her voice, the stillness so favorable to the soft murmurs of the gale. After enjoying it, in silence, some minutes, —“ How could not one fancy,” said she, “ that it really spoke to us, in some unknown tongue?” —“ A lively imagination,” I answered, “ certainly might ; nor can one wonder that illiterate people, who love the marvellous, have sometimes believed, they heard articulate sounds in the air. A hail storm, particularly, is often preceded by a noise that seems so unaccountable, when there is no wind, that it is natural enough, for persons not accustomed to investigation, to apprehend a supernatural cause ; and, their imaginations once heated, to be persuaded that they distinguish threats of vengeance from Heaven itself upon a guilty world. Harriet said she never had heard other noises in the air than what was quite usual ; such as wind, distant thunder, or the dashing of
the

the waves against the shore, which she had often distinguished from her convent, and always with a very pleasing kind of melancholy. "The billows lash the sounding shore."—"How beautiful is that image, my dear Mrs. Willars," continued she, "in the poem we were reading this morning." We agreed, that it was only on the sea coast that its force and truth could be adequately felt. You will perceive, by this little specimen of our conversation, my dear Edward, that I have found a companion after my own heart;—what a treasure in the absence of its master! Our rising friendship bids fair to be permanent; at least all human probability is in its favour. Were we either of us prone to the little jealousies so commonly baneful to its existence, the difference in our age might exclude them; from clashing interests, we are in as little danger as from rivalry; and our minds, as far as I can hitherto judge, seem so truly kindred,
that

that methinks, I hope I shall not be mistaken, we may defy every thing but death to disunite them.

Wednesday, 9.

The weather has been unfavorable to our rambles, my dear Edward; we have spent the greatest part of the day in my room, each reading by turns, while the other was at work. Harriet has not been spoiled by novel reading; her studies have been almost wholly confined to books of devotion; and, young as she is, reason and reflection have already charms for her. She thinks *Telemachus* and the *Prince of Abyssinia* the most entertaining books in the world; they are the only works of imagination she has yet read.—The *Ramblers* have been our companions to-day; nor would she consent to change them, as I proposed, for lighter reading.

I shall

I shall subscribe, for her, to the library at M——; for it is proper she should be a little acquainted with history; and, as it is not my favorite study, I am but ill-provided. Truth, when it paints the errors and vices, that, in all ages, have disgraced mankind, always fills me with melancholy. I am, besides, so naturally disposed to espouse the cause of the unfortunate, that I am always most interested for the vanquished, the captive, and oppressed, even when suffering their deserts: and thus I am in continual pain. Is it wonderful, or inexcuseable, when the real pictures of life are so sad, one should have recourse, for relief, to the fairy pencil of imagination; which, at least, renders the prospect agreeable? If a melancholy incident, or a depraved character, in a romance, affect the heart or shocks the judgment, one has the consolation of reflecting that it is not true. Nevertheless, I dislike all such books where very depraved characters are
intro-

introduced, or atrocities related, my aim of relief is frustrated, and I turn with disgust from the page.

The weather clears, and we are going to take the benefit of it; for the soil here is so gravelly, that the rain must continue a long time before the ways are impracticable, to such determined walkers as Harriet and I. Adieu, my love!

Thursday, 10.

I am just returned from an excursion to M——, with Mr. Peterfon: he usually goes thither on horseback; but was prevailed upon by his favorite daughter, Miss Anne, to drive her and me in the chaise. With her assistance I did the little business that I went upon, viz. made some purchases and subscribed to the library.

We

We dined at a Mr. Parkitt's, a friend of the family's; and whose wife, a lively, pleasant, little woman, made us very welcome.

In complaisance to my conductress, I was obliged to walk the streets rather more than was quite agreeable to me; for in proportion as she dislikes rural excursions, I detest the parading of a town. It must be confessed, the notice she attracted from some red-coats, who are quartered there, was gratifying to a youthful heart: I felt it was so, and suffered myself to be led, e'en as she chose.

Friday, 11.

The morning has been wholly dedicated to a review of the books I chose yesterday. The collection that the library at M—— afforded, except in novels, was neither
large

large nor select; it afforded, however, some history and voyages, and with these we must shift for the present.

M—— is a very small town, and its resources, in every kind, are but indifferent, at least in the commercial way. Miss Peterson assures me it is very gay and sociable; for being too circumscribed to furnish more than one set of company, all who can entertain at all meet sociably together, and form parties most evenings without objecting to each other upon the score of profession or trade, as is the case in most provincial towns, where the doctor's lady despises the apothecary's, the apothecary's the grocer's, the grocer's the shoemaker's, &c. I am glad our near neighbours at M—— have so much sense, and I shall be happy to be acquainted with them. The county town is full five and twenty miles from hence, and a visit there is talked of here as one to the metropolis.

I have

I have concluded a bargain with Mrs. Peterfon for the board of my friend Sailor, which it is certainly very just I should pay. She raised some difficulties, which, however, were speedily removed.

In the afternoon we regaled ourselves with a long walk, the first these three days. The evening has introduced a stranger, of whom more to-morrow : at present I have just time to say, good night, my Edward.

Saturday, 12.

We were sitting down to rather a late dish of tea yesterday, for our long walk had made the family wait, when Mr. Peterfon entered, introducing, to our great surprise, a gentleman whom I immediately recollected to be the same I once met with upon the common. "Come wife," said he, "let's have a cup of good tea, and give this

this gentleman one ; he has just done me a piece of service, and I hope we shall be better acquainted." The stranger, who, from the appearance of his new acquaintance, could not have expected to have seen such smart ladies in his family, looked a little disconcerted, and stammered out a awkward apology for his dress ; he was even retiring, but Mr. Peterson would by no means allow it : he told him he *should* stay, and as for his girls they were used to see men look like men, and not powdered and frilled like monkies. " Look at Tom and I," added he. The reference was indeed very proper, and calculated to put Mr. Ewer into conceit with himself. The father had a long beard, a dirty shirt, a coloured handkerchief by way of cravat, a coat adorned with spots of different colours, and his stockings hanging about his heels : the son had, perhaps, washed his face and combed his hair in the morning, and that was all the difference. Mr. Ewer, though
negli-

negligently dressed, was yet perfectly neat; he had a loose coat and pantaloons, and an air of cleanliness and gentility that pierced through every disguise; he took his place at the tea table, and soon became perfectly at ease with the company.

Miss Peterson was the first to inquire the nature of the service he had rendered her father; and we gathered from the two gentlemen what follows:—Mr. Peterson returning alone from the Plough, a public house beyond the common, so frequently alluded to, observed at some distance a man with a gun in his hand, entering a small wood which belongs to him; he knew the fellow to be a notorious poacher, and alone, and unarmed as he was, quickened his pace to overtake him, which he did not till he was advanced into the thickest part of the wood: he then called to him, and ordered him peremptorily to give up his gun. The man, who it seems was a little in liquor, gave

gave him rough language, and swore that it must be a much better man than Mr. Peterfon, who is, however, tall and powerful, that should make him give up a gun or any thing else that he had a mind to keep. Mr. Peterfon, whose courage was also warm from the public house he had just quitted, advanced to force away the subject of contention; the fellow levelled it at him, and swore he would fire if he came on another step: at this moment Mr. Ewer, who was traversing the wood in his way home, arrived on the spot, unheard in the noise of the dispute; he seized the poacher's arm, almost in the act of drawing the trigger, and with Mr. P—'s help easily secured him, whom, however, they released, on his pleading his family, and promise of future good behaviour, in token of which he delivered up his gun, and engaged to do the same by his dog.

We all shuddered at this relation; Mrs.
Peterfon

Peterfon scolded her husband upon several accounts; for going out, for drinking at the plough, for following the man, and concluded by assuring him, that she expected he would one day come short home. The eldest daughter blamed the indulgence shewn the culprit, in which opinion she was heartily seconded by Mr. Thomas, who added, that he should have knocked his brains out with as little remorse as he would a mad dog's; for a poacher was no better: all agreed it was very lucky that Mr. Ewer happened to pass that way, particularly as he said it was what he had never done before of an evening, and was induced to do then, merely to humour Mrs. Clarke's, his landlady's, youngest child, who had asked him for nuts. Miss Anne thanked him with her eyes full of tears, while Harriet changed colour so perpetually, that I really was afraid she would have fainted. Mr. Peterfon, who by the time he had swallowed a dozen cups of tea,

began to wonder at his own temerity, and increase in gratitude towards his deliverer; shook him heartily by the hand, insisted upon seeing him often, and would by no means suffer him to go before supper. Cards were introduced, and Mr. Peterson was well satisfied with his new acquaintance's performance at whist—"I think," said he, "I plays as good a game as most people; but this gentleman's almost too hard for me now and then." With his manners and conversation every one had reason to be satisfied—the first, gentle, easy, and unassuming; the latter, shewing good sense and information, without displaying it: in short, my dear Edward, he is really an agreeable man, and a desirable acquisition to our society: he is engaged to dine here on Sunday, when you shall hear more of him. He retired soon after supper, with apparent unwillingness;—"But I would not give more trouble than I can help," said he, "and therefore will not

not make Mrs. Clarke, who is an early riser, watch beyond her usual hour: had I known the good fortune that awaited me, I would have been provided with a key."

-- I like to see people so considerate.——

Adieu, my Edward!

Sunday, 13. — Nine o'clock—Evening.

My dear Edward has but a second place in my thoughts to-day, except in my prayers; my journal therefore has rested till this hour.

We were all at work in the parlour yesterday, when our new acquaintance, Mr. Ewer, called with inquiries after our health; he congratulated himself highly, on the accident which introduced him, he said, to so charming a family, in being useful to it; and brought a message from Mrs. Clarke

to remind Mrs. Peterson that she had promised to take tea with her, and requesting that it might be a family party. Mrs. P—— seemed nothing loth, and consulted her daughters, who said, they had no vacant day in the following week but Wednesday, and Wednesday was accordingly fixed. We have engaged you, Mrs. Willas, said the eldest, to Miss Groves, on Monday; Tuesday we are to take you to Mrs. Bennetts, and Thursday is the ball at M——, where I hope you will go with us; Friday we shall be tired, or perhaps not returned, and Saturday is, you know, an awkward day.

I would willingly have escaped from their scheme, but the ball is all I am permitted to decline, the other engagements being professedly on my account. These visits are very insipid to me, my dear Edward! but as they are meant to amuse me, I shall endeavour, at least, to seem amused. Mr. Ewer's visit was not a very short one; we
fell

fell into discourse upon books, with which it appears he takes care to be well supplied from London; and he offered the loan of them in so handsome a manner, that I believe I shall not scruple to avail myself of his civility, to supply the deficiencies of the collection at M——. The ladies dropping off one by one to their toilets, Mr. Ewer at length took his leave, and Mrs. P——, who had waited the moment with impatience, hardly suffered him to be out of hearing, before she said, she thought the man did not intend to go away; that if he had a hankering after either of her daughters, she could assure him he would lose his time, with his books, and poetry, and stuff. She never, for her part, knew any good come of reading: there was poor Harriet's mother always poring over books and nonsense; she had read herself into a consumption; had she bustled about, and minded her family, she might have been alive now: She thanked God she had no book-

ish people in her family. The afternoon proving wet, we all spent it together; our gentlemen came home late, rather merry, and not at all agreeable.

After service this morning Harriet and I, choosing a round-about way home, was surprised in a shower: we ran for shelter to a cottage; which entering rather abruptly, for the rain fell in good earnest, we surprised a middle-aged woman, surrounded with children, and in tears: as she rose to receive us, we perceived that she was far advanced in her pregnancy. She gave us chairs, and before we could inquire the cause of her distress, a little thing looking me earnestly in the face, said, "Dad's gone away."—And Rover too," said another, "and all the bread; and mam's spinning work." The poor woman's tears redoubled at their little innocent complaints: she informed us, that her husband was really gone off with every moveable that he

he could carry, even to her small stock of child-bed linen. That it was true, as he was rather a loose chap, she sometimes did not see him for several days; but she was afraid this time he was gone for good. That she had not a morsel of bread in the house, nor a halfpenny to procure any.— We gave our mite to this distressed mother, who immediately dispatched her eldest child to the village for a loaf. We engaged to supply her loss of linen, and that she should want for nothing during her confinement; and left her quite restored to hope and cheerfulness.

All the way home, Harriet regretted that being Sunday, we could not immediately set to work. She consoled herself, however, that she would look out her spare linen in readiness, “and to-morrow morning, very early,” said she, “we’ll get up to business.”

On our return we related our adventure, and described the cottage, which proves to be that of the poacher who had the dispute with Mr. Peterson. The family are clearly of opinion, that, fearful of the consequences of his insolence and brutality, he has absconded.

Mr. Ewer dined with us as expected, and gained still more upon my good opinion, not only by the charms of his conversation, but by the choice of books he had selected for our amusement; which could only be from his own collection. This last is certainly no bad criterion whereby to form a judgment of the heart and understanding—I think one may safely say, “tell me what you read, and I’ll tell you what you are,” as the usual proverb is.

Our morning’s discovery did not fail to become the subject of discourse. Mr. Peterson said, “the parish was rid of a rogue,
and

and that was a good thing.”—“ I see no good in it,” said his wife : “ what ! and all his family left chargeable.”—“ True mother,” said Mr. Thomas, “ we shall have a fine increase of poor’s rates. Farmer Clarke told me this morning, that Watson pretends to be sick, and wants relief : there is a fine tribe of brats there ; and there are two Irish hay-makers contrived to be taken in at the plough ; one is like to die, and the other will not go on : A pack of idle vagabonds, they ought to be flogged ; what is the parish to do with them ? ”—“ Hang them,” said Mr. Ewer dryly. “ No, we cannot do that neither ; ” said Mr. Thomas.—“ But you would if you could,” returned he ; “ well, Sir, it is happy that the law has put some limits to the power of a parish officer.” Mr. Thomas was so persuaded that all but paupers must think as he did, that he did not feel this rebuke ; and soon after we rose to set out on our

walk to Mr. Figgins's, whither it had been agreed that we should go early. Mr. Ewer accompanied us to the door; but, from a sense of propriety, declined Miss Peterson's repeated invitations to walk in. We found a large party already assembled; there was the Miss Grove I am to visit this week, a good-looking woman of about thirty, who lives with her brother, and keeps their house; her two brothers; Mrs. Bennet, an opulent farmer's wife; and, besides those of the family already mentioned, the mother, two younger daughters, and another son. We were hardly seated before Miss Peterson acquainted Mrs. Figgins that she had lost her labour in endeavouring to prevail upon a gentleman who was with us to walk in. Mrs. Figgins civilly answered, that she was sorry any friend they might have with them, should treat her with such ceremony. "I suppose," said the elder Grove, "Miss Peterson, that this same gentleman

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gentleman

gentleman was your new acquaintance, Mr. Ewer."—"The same, Sir," answered her father; and away flew all the ladies to the windows, to catch a sight of the stranger, as he was walking pensively away across the green: when they had gratified their curiosity, and made some remarks not worth repeating, the circumstance which had introduced him to the family, became, of course, the subject of conversation. All blamed Mr. P.'s lenity, and said he had let loose a rogue upon the public. Mr. Peterson threw the blame on Mr. Ewer—"He persuaded me to let him go," said he, "and I thought as how I could not well refuse the man, when he had just saved my life, as one may say." "Saved your life, indeed!" said Grove the elder, "I believe it never was in any danger. I have heard of a man, who to get introduced to a lady, hired a porter to affront her, just as he was passing by, to take her part; and I

fancy this was a scheme something of the same sort ; it was necessary to let the accomplice go, or he might have blabbed.”

“ And pray, Sir, said Miss Anne, how could Mr. Ewer, or any body, suppose that papa would have followed a man with a gun into the wood, late in the evening, when he had not so much as a stick to defend himself. I believe papa’s life was in very great danger ; and I shall never forget to whom he owes it.”—“ The service is likely to be rewarded, I believe,” said Miss Grove. “ That comes of course,” said her younger brother : “ In all novels, the fair damsel always falls in love with her own, or her father’s deliverer ; it is the same thing.”—“ Yes, Sir,” said Miss Anne, with some spirit, “ it is the same thing.”—“ What, child, is the same thing,” said her mother—“ Not to fall in love, I hope. Had it been a neighbour, indeed, and any of them would have done as much, where is the great matter of service ?

service? but pray let us hear of no love here.”—“The child knows better,” said her father.

The young ladies were very anxious to know what sort of a man Mr. Ewer was in company, and being assured by Miss Peterson that he was very well-bred and agreeable, it was universally regretted by them that he had not been prevailed upon to walk in and join the party. The gentlemen, of course, were less favorably disposed towards him; their bitterness increased in exact proportion with the ladies indulgence; having nothing to alledge against his conduct, they arraigned his circumstances; he was a fortune hunter, a bankrupt, and at length a highwayman; although one of the crimes of which they accused him, was, that he had no horse. Mr. Thomas Peterson attacked his sisters on their partiality to gentility, to which he seems as averse as his mother to science; and

and poor Mr. Ewer fared as ill for his good qualities as for his supposed bad circumstances. All this did not prevent a little plan of the Miss Figgins's to meet us on Wednesday at farmer Clarke's; this was settled in a whisper among the young ladies. We were regaled after tea with a syllabub, and returned home to evening prayer—the regular practice of a Sunday.

To what an hour have I been writing!—
Good night.

Monday, Sept. 14.

It is refreshment, if not rest, to write to my Edward; and the hours I give to him, though stolen from sleep, are still the pleasantest I know.

Not a minute of this day have I had to spare; Harriet, with her work basket and
a bun-

a bundle of linen, was at my door by seven in the morning ; we began our task without delay, and hearing the Miss Peterfons much earlier than their ufual hour, Harriet ran to claim their help, and invite them to join us, without a doubt of prevailing : fhe was, however, difappointed ; for although very good girls, they are not quite enough fo to forego their own amusements for a poor person's neceffities. They were very forry ; but they had fo much to do to get their drefses in readinefs for the ball on Thursday ; having, befides, fo many engagements : it was quite out of the question. Poor Harriet returned quite difconcerted ; chidden too, by her aunt, for neglecting her own little adjustments, for fuch romantic fancies, and affured that, as there were tickets for all the family at no expence, fhe muft take care to be in readinefs ; for fhe would, on no account, be excufed fo good an opportunity of making her firft appearance in public.

She

She begged that she might be permitted to stay at home, and keep Mrs. Willars company ; but this was not to be obtained : nor, indeed, my dear Edward, should I have suffered it. I would by no means deprive the good girl of a pleasure, which has, at least, the charm of novelty for her : on the contrary, I have engaged that her dress shall be in readiness ; and do not doubt, as we are both quick needlewomen, of fulfilling my engagement, without prejudice to the task we have undertaken.

We work and chat in my apartment.—
Will you have a specimen of our conversation ?—

“ Pray, Madam, what sort of a man is Mr. Willars ? I wish very much to have some idea of him.”

“ You have hit upon a good method to
set

set me a chattering; but your question is *so* general, my dear."

"Is there any body here he is at all like?—Is he like Mr. Ewer, Madam?"

"He is, perhaps, the least unlike Mr. Ewer of any person you could name here; yet he is not at all like him in person; he is rather fuller, and not so tall; he is more florid, more animated; he is really a handsome man, which Mr. Ewer is not."

"Don't you think Mr. Ewer genteel and good-looking, Madam?"—

"He is very interesting and agreeable, I allow you, my dear, and appears to the more advantage here, because there is no other man to be compared with him;—but if you were to see my Edward!"

"I wish

“I wish I could, Madam ; I am sure he must be very amiable, since he is your choice ; but yet —— ”

“But what, my dear? You think too I may be a little partial—You have no idea of a more agreeable man than Mr. Ewer.—Well, when you have been to the ball, you may, perhaps, alter your mind ; though I don’t think you will meet with a Mr. Willars there.”

“Nor I neither, indeed, Madam ; but do pray describe him a little more particularly, that if I should see him I may know him.”

“Well, then, Harriet, if you should see a middle-aged man ; the tallest of the middle-size, though ; well-made, rather stout, neither fair nor brown, but a complexion extremely clear ; and very florid ; an oval face, a very fine hazle eye, an aquiline

aquiline nose, a very pretty mouth, and beautiful teeth; if it is not Mr. Willars, it is somebody very much like him."

"He is quite a beauty then, Madam."

"He really is as handsome as I describe him, my love; but that is the least part of his merit; nor do I think you ever heard me mention it before. He has a mind that would adorn the homeliest person; a tender, feeling, generous heart; all the frankness and disinterestedness so characteristic of his profession, with the elegance and liberality of the most enlightened; and though, perhaps, less versed in the sciences than Mr. Ewer, as he was bred to the sea service, he has a head well stored with useful and polite knowledge. He is lively and entertaining, very attentive to the ladies, and always a great favourite with them; never singling out a particular object of attention, because
handsomer

handsomer than the rest, or supposed of more consequence, as it is so common with young men to do; till the distinguished lady, and every one else, is ready to suppose some particular address is designed her:—No, my dear, even when he paid avowed court to me, in company with other women, he never shewed me any marked attentions; but contrived to be agreeable to all; while the little delicate preferences he paid me, would have escaped almost any less interested observer.”

“Well, I wish I was a little bird, to carry Mr. Willars what you say; *such* praise! and from *you*, Madam!”—

“There is a little bird that will be a great tell-tale if ever it reaches him; but, alas! that is so uncertain.”

“Well, Madam, we will say no more upon

upon that head;—tell me how I have done this little fondling cap.”

In the afternoon we paid our visit to Miss Grove, whom we found with only her brothers and Mr. Deacon: the latter has transferred his attentions (he has a taste for the *penfoso*, however he came by it,) from me to Harriet, with almost as little probability of success:—poor youth!

Miss Grove is not like either of her brothers in person; but in disposition seems to favour the elder: she has no bad feature but her nose, which is remarkably turned up, and gives to her countenance that sarcastic turn which prevails too much in her conversation. From this sketch of the lady you will expect to hear that we had all the village gossip; no absent person was spared; and we had even a few smart things at some present. Mr. Peterson sparred a good deal with her; but

but his chance was but a bad one : she has some wit, and a great flow of words. Nor cards, nor syllabubs relieved us ; at length Mrs. Peterfon, to my great comfort, recollected that it was late, and broke up the party.

I forgot too that it is late :—good night, my Edward.

Tuesday Night, Sept. 15.

We have been hard at work all day, and have every thing, that is very necessary, in readiness to take to-morrow morning to our protegee.

Another insipid visit is over.—Mrs. Bennet has all the ill-nature of her neighbour, without any of her wit. She abuses one for being well drest ; another because not so rich ; a third for being better bred
than

than herself. In short, my dear Edward, I have caught her spleen, and am returned quite out of humour; fatigued too, and almost wet through, for it rained all the way home. Mrs. Peterfon advises me to bed; I believe she is right, and shall therefore bid you adieu.

Wednesday Night, Sept. 16.

Before breakfast this morning, Harriet and I, with our sticks, our bundle, and dog, set off for the cottage: it is situated about half a mile down a lonely, dirty lane, which branches out of that which leads to the village: there is, however, a nearer and pleasanter way across some grounds, which, of course, we took. We found Mrs. Smith still up, delivered our little present, with a promise of more as soon as time would permit. She was very
thankful,

thankful, which I was glad to find, as it gave Harriet great pleasure, and made her think her trouble overpaid; and I should have been concerned that her young heart, in its early offerings at the shrine of benevolence, had met with the repulse of unthankfulness. I cautioned her, however, on our return, that it was what she must be prepared to encounter with in the discharge of her duties, and arm her mind to support without discouragement. Gratitude, my dear Edward, we know, is not the virtue of the ignorant; it is very rare indeed in all degrees, and, when we only do our duty, why should we be uneasy that it is not taken in account here, when we are so sure it will be hereafter. We desired the poor woman to send one of her children to let us know when she is brought to bed, and took our leave.

We returned part of the way by the side of a small river which winds through Mr.

Peterfon's

Peterfon's meadow land, and has a bridge across this lane. We had just turned into the second field beyond, and were walking by the side of a high hedge, when the report of a gun so near as to lead me for a moment, to suppose that the shot had wounded Harriet, made us both scream out together; for she had the same apprehension for me. A poor mangled partridge fell fluttering at our feet; and the sportsmen, Mr. Grove and Mr. Deacon, with several dogs, in the same instant, made their appearance from the next field. They picked up their bird, hoped we were more frightened than hurt, and went away. The noise of our screams had, however, alarmed a more gentle knight: Mr. Ewer was fishing on the river's bank; he leaped a hedge which separated and concealed us; and ran eagerly to offer his assistance, before he knew to whom. "I little thought," said he, as he advanced, "when I heard the cry of distress so near, the fair damsels

were persons so interesting to me: What has alarmed you, ladies? was it the gun I heard, or the sportsmen I just saw?" He was not to be denied seeing us home; alledging, that his inclination and his good fortune had alike constituted him the champion of the family. "I am a true knight, indeed, ladies," continued he; "as valorous as enthusiastic; and almost as thin as Don Quixote himself. I am ready to engage any monster in your defence.—Do ask Miss Harriet, if she has not long since dubbed me the knight of the rueful countenance?" "If ever she did, sir," said I, "this morning's adventure must certainly alter her opinion, for you appear wonderfully in spirits." In effect, Edward, he entertained us extremely, chatted, laughed—almost rattled. I looked at him several times with amazement, to be convinced if it really was the same Mr. Ewer, who is usually so serious and pensive. Arrived at the house, he recollected he
had

had left his fishing tackle and sport by the river's side ; and hastened back to secure them.

I have assisted, with great pleasure, all the morning, in contriving Harriet's dress for to-morrow's ball : it is very simple, and becomes her extrême; I have been trying it on her, and feel as pleased and as proud, to see her look so well, as if she were, indeed, my daughter. The little gipsy steals an approving glance at the glass; and blushes when she sees that I observe her.

You know we were to drink tea at Farmer Clarke's. We set out early, for it is full two miles from hence. Mr. Ewer met us about half way ; he had already apprised us, that his hosts, though very good people, were not extremely well bred ; we were therefore the less surprised, (I mean Harriet and myself, the rest of

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the

the party had been there before,) that the farmer should prefer a pipe, by the kitchen fire, to our company ; or that the eldest boy, aged about sixteen, should run away and hide himself.

Mrs. Clarke received us in a small neat parlour, which is let to Mr. Ewer; the casement window is overgrown with woodbine and jessamy; and it is as rustick as its owners, though in a far different style.—The younger children all ran to meet Mr. Ewer, and asked what he had brought them? they hung about his knees the whole evening; nor would he suffer them to be sent away before their bed-time, in spite of their mother's fears of their being troublesome.

All the Miss Figgins, escorted by their eldest brother, arrived soon after us; and we had quite a jolly party. Mrs. Clarke found excellent cream, brown bread, and
butter:

butter: the rest of the entertainment was furnished by Mr. Ewer, who was all sufficient to it.—We had fruit, cakes, wine, and punch in abundance, to which we did great honour. Mr. Ewer was attentive and polite to all, without distinction: his morning spirits had not forsaken him; he had agreeable things to say to every one; little sports to amuse us, and at length set us all singing, himself giving the example with these sweet words of Mr. Hayley's:

“ 'Tis memory's aid, my sighs implore.”

He has an agreeable voice, and great taste. He afterwards sung the following stanzas, to the tune of the “ Lads of Patie's Mill;” and accompanied with the flute such as chose that assistance,

O shield me from the heart,
Averse to pity's pains;
Where friendship claims no part,
And self unrivall'd reigns.

Love, from a siege so vain,
 His blunted arrows turns;
 Or entrance if he gain,
 With savage fury burns.

Be mine that gentle mind,
 Where soft affections dwell,
 And all the loves combin'd,
 Have found a shelter'd cell.

No rage shall intervene,
 Wild tumult to oppose;
 My Sylvia shall be queen,
 And banish all her foes.

Every one sung in their turn as well as they could, for the good cheer had inspired us all; even Harriet, at length, vanquished her timidity; and gave us—

“ In my pleasant native plains.”

She was much applauded, for her voice is music itself: in short, our tea visit lasted till ten o'clock; and even then we parted with reluctance;—the young ladies all agreeing, that Mr. Ewer is a charming man.

Thursday,

Thursday, 17.

The young folks are set out for M—; they dress and sleep at Mr. Packit's.— Poor Harriet was sadly out of spirits; for she received a letter from her cousin, informing her of the marriage of her uncle Jarvis, to his hand-maid Betty, just before breakfast. This event, though expected, gives her great concern; nor is it at all agreeable to any of the family. It has extremely ruffled Mrs. Peterfon; and I have been sitting alone all the morning, very much missing my young friend. A little robin, whom we often fed from my window, came to keep me company: I have thus addressed him:

AUTUMN.

ON THE ROBIN.

When mists obscure the morning ray,
Scarce clearing ere 'tis noon;
Yet soft the air, serene the day,
Tho' swift its radiance flies away,
Still evening closing soon.

Now richest colours we behold,
The sloping wood display;
For ere the leaves forsake their hold,
With ev'ry tint from red to gold,
They're midst the verdure gay.

Then, hasten, sweet familiar guest,
Resume thy fav'rite stand;
There plume thy wing, distend thy chest,
There sing secure, and take at rest
Thy wages from my hand.

With crumbs the verdant lawn I'll strew,
Still glean'd from each repast;
Fresh grain shall drink the early dew,
My Winter warbler all for you,
Beneath my window cast.

When silent all the tuneful train,
'Tis sweet thy voice to hear;
Soft telling, in mellifluous strain,
Now sober Autumn comes again,
The matron of the year.

Thy matins still, yon grove beside,
Each morning let me hear;
Resume the song at even tide,
While hollow winds resounding wide,
Announce the closing year.

When scar'd at Winter's brow austere,
Each tender, Summer-friend
My rustic dwelling come not near,
Haste then, my solitude to clear,
My lonely meal attend.

So shall my open casement still
A friendly shelter prove,
When frost bound is the silent rill,
When hoar the lawr, and bare the hill,
And cheerless all the grove.

Mrs. Peterson informs me, that Harriet's mother was the daughter of a merchant of good repute in London; who, after many years marriage, not having issue, sunk his property in an annuity, on the joint lives of his wife and himself, and retired into the country; in less than two years after this step, his wife proved with child, and Harriet was this latter fruit. Unable to give her a fortune, they bestowed great pains on her education; and had the satisfaction, before they left this world, of seeing her well settled in it, as the wife of Mr. Peterson; who, though not rich, was in easy circumstances, of an unexceptionable character, and a very good match for their daughter. This Mr. Peterson, being the eldest brother, inherited

a small paternal estate, which, however, came to him incumbered; and losing his wife, whom he tenderly loved, when Harriet, their only child, was but twelve years old, he gave himself up to an unhappy propensity, to drinking, which shortened his days. He was never an active man; and left his affairs in so bad a condition, that it was necessary to dispose of the estate: it produced only 1500/. This is Harriet's whole dependance; and with this her uncle thinks to match her to some one of his rich neighbours, and will probably succeed. Mr. Deacon seems much taken with her, and has every possible encouragement from her friends.

Mr. Peterson came home this evening, from a market which he attends, a little elevated: his wife took the opportunity, rather unwisely, to vent some hoarded ill-humour upon him, and refused to give him some liquor which he desired, al-
ledging

ledging that he had had too much already. He sent her to the devil, in very plain English; and, late and dark as it was, set off to his favorite house of resort, the Plough, where he is sure of having, for his money, every thing he calls for.

Mr. Peterfon loves a little drink and conviviality; and sometimes, I think, (we are all apt to judge for others, you know,) that were I his wife, I should contrive, were it only from motives of œconomy, to let him have them at home. He has many good qualities; he is just, hospitable, and friendly.—His wife has also her's; but they are of a different, perhaps, too opposite cast: her ill-judged parsimony drives him to expence; and her frequent ill-humour from home.—She is out of temper because he goes out; he goes out because she is out of temper: thus the effect produces the cause, the cause the effect, in perpetual rotation. The eldest
E 6 daughter

daughter fides with her mother, and is her favourite; the youngest with the father; and both are surprised, and not quite pleased, with the preference I so evidently give Harriet to either. Adieu for to-night, my Edward!

Friday, 18.

A little messenger arrived from Mrs. Smith, this morning, to say, his mammy was brought to bed of a daughter. Mrs. Peterson has since been with me to see her: we found her, in the care of some neighbours, cheerful, and tolerably recovered. Mrs. Peterson, one of whose good qualities it is, to be very tender to the sick, paid her great attention; and is, at this moment, engaged in preparing caudle for her, with her own hands.

Mr.

Mr. Thomas Peterfon has juft brought word, that Squire Altenden, the Lord of the Manor, and owner of the eftate and great houfe, is dead. The heir is a younger brother, with whom he was at variance ; and who is an utter ftranger here. We are all in alarm left he fhould be fond of fporting, and tenacious of rights, which have been fo wholly neglected by the late proprietor, (to whom Mr. Thomas was game-keeper,) that they are become quite obfolete. In effect, it appears that the tenants would have reafon to regret their lofs : they have been all growing rich, for many years, upon the fame rents, eftablifhed for a century, while the price of their produce has doubled ; while the wood and game has been abfolutely at their difpofal, under a carelefs mafter.

Mr. Ewer called this morning with a preſent of a fine perch, which he had caught, to Mrs. Peterfon : he ſaid he was engaged

to spend the evening at Mr. Grove's, whether our gentlemen are also gone.—He is quite the fashion at this moment.

Friday night.

Our ladies did not return till evening: they stayed dinner at Mr. Packitt's; whose wife, I should inform you, is a sister of Mr. Bertram's. Miss Peterson was in haste to let us know, that there was a large ball, and a charming company; that she danced with a smart officer, notwithstanding her engagement to Mr. Bertram; the dresses of the ladies of note, &c.

Miss Anne too was ready with her descriptions to supply whatever her sister might omit. Harriet alone was silent, and even dull: I was impatient till I had her all to myself, in my own apartment; nor was she less so, to communicate her observations:

servations : as soon as tea was dispatched, we withdrew, and left the ladies to themselves. “ Well, my love, I have a birth and a death to announce to you : have you nothing to tell me?—How have you been entertained?—how do you like a ball?” “ One sees a great deal of fine company, to be sure, Ma’am,” said she ; “ and one dances, and—and——I believe every body was pleased but me ; but it was so warm, the dance so crowded—then I was sure to be pushed to the bottom ; for one lady came and said, that was my place—I stood next to Miss such a one ; another thrust by, without a word of apology ; so that not having courage to contend, I was at a distance from every body I knew, and alone, in the midst of a crowd. My partner too, with his fine steps, was never in time ; and he is so disagreeable, you know,”—“ I don’t know, my dear ; I hope it is not Mr. Deacon, of whom you speak so slightly.” “ Indeed it is,” said she ;

she ; “ I had rather not have danced at all than with him : but he offered ; and my cousin Charlotte said I could not refuse him, except I had been engaged : yet, when an officer asked her, she turned off Mr. Bertram to Anne, in spite of her engagement.” “ Perhaps you would have been glad to have danced with an officer too ? ” “ No, indeed ; I had no such inclination ; I did not care to dance at all, except the dance had been better conducted.” — “ So that, after all, my dear, you were not entertained.” Not much, indeed : my dear Mrs. Willars, I should have been fifty times happier at home with you : however, I am not sorry to have been ; I shall not be anxious to go again. — Was your cousin’s partner of your party ? yes, he was ; he is a fine looking man, and very shewy in his regimentals ; but he is neither well bred, nor agreeable : he seems as if he was of too much consequence to be civil, even to his partner ; stares you
out

out of countenance; and never offers the most common-place attention to any one. Some of his companions who did not dance, but lay lounging along upon the benches, almost the whole evening, came whispering to him, while we were at tea, in the strangest manner, as if they were talking of us: the Captain turned his back upon his partner and the company to converse with them; and, except that he condescended to take his tea when it was offered him, scarce appeared to be of our party. No, indeed, Ma'am, I saw no body at all like Mr. Willars, or even Mr. Ewer.—“ Such men as Mr. Ewer, my dear, do not make a figure at public places: his accomplishments are not of the nature that excite attention at a ball; a noisy, empty, rattling coxcomb, would have ten times the notice and the chance.”

“ Therefore, my dear Mrs. Willars, I do not like balls and public places: How far

far more delightful is an evening spent in lively and instructive conversation with you! I could not help thinking, that Mr. Ewer might, perhaps, be here; and, regretting my loss—for he shews you off, Madam, as well as you do him.” You see, my dear Edward, that this is a little flattery: she is a charming one; and, so far, all is very well: but the partiality with which she seems to view this unknown Mr. Ewer, begins to give me serious alarm: she is at such an age, and of such a temper, as make such impressions doubly dangerous. Here is no relief from dissipation and variety; comparisons with all she meets with can only favour her delusion:—What is to be done? I fear to caution her, lest I should give her the ideas I mean to check. His attentions to her, if they are particular, are too delicate to be avoided or resented. I cannot forbid him a house, where I am not at all related; nor treat with distance and reserve a man
fo

so evidently suffering under the frowns of fortune, and so apparently deserving a better fate.

Advise me, Edward, in my dreams advise me, that this dear amiable child, of my adoption, be not the victim of an unfortunate partiality. If Harriet is unhappy, Sophia will be so too. Come to our mutual relief, my Edward; come and convince this little innocent, that there are men more amiable than this dangerous Ewer.

If I can but throw cold water upon this gentle flame till my Edward's return, I can then offer her an asylum, and a kind advice; but till then, alas! alas!—Sweet, good night.

Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I could say, good night, until 'tis morrow.

Saturday,

Saturday, Sept. 19.

A cold, which increases upon me very fast, and the haziness of the weather, prevented my accompanying Harriet, this morning, to Mrs. Smith's; and she was too eager to take her a few more necessaries, which were completed yesterday, to delay the visit on my account. She packed up a little basket, very well filled, and set off with our friend, Sailor, immediately after breakfast. She came running to my apartment on her return; her sweet colour much heightened, and herself evidently flurried. She sat down, out of breath, without speaking. "You have walked too fast, my dear, said I: I was to blame to let you go alone."—She blushed excessively; and, hesitatingly, said, "Why so, Madam; I hope there was no impropriety in it: indeed, I had not an idea of meeting any body there, or I would not have gone,
upon

upon any account, without you." "Of meeting any body; who could you meet there, my love? I had no idea, either, of your meeting any one; I was only blaming you for walking so fast, to flurry yourself."—"Who could you possibly meet?"—She wept outright.—"My dear Harriet, my dear child," continued I, "Why are you so affected? how awkward I am thus to increase your uneasiness, by my endeavours to remove it:—Recover yourself, and tell me what has happened; I am sure there is nothing, on your part, to disapprove. I at length collected from her, that she had found Mr. Ewer at the poor woman's house; where he was sitting by her, and listening so patient and attentive to her long stories, that Harriet entered unobserved. A woollen curtain divides the only apartment of the cottage, and separates the bed from the door. Harriet remained silent, without seeing any person, or being seen by any one, imagining that Mrs. Smith

was

was talking to her apothecary: one of the children at length discovered her; and Mr. Ewer precipitately arose, paying his compliments to her, with almost as much confusion, as she received them. She hesitated to deliver her little present before him; which he seeming to perceive, almost immediately withdrew. "That good gentleman," said Mrs. Smith, as he retired, "who never seems to have money to lay out upon himself, has always some to give the poor: he has done more good in the three months he has lived here, than all our rich neighbours in three years. I sent my Billy to farmer Clarke's, who is overseer, last night, for something for my poor children, because I was ashamed like, to be troublesome to your good ladyship, or Madam Peterfon; he would not send me a halfpenny over my allowance, which will not find us bread; but this choice good man, happening to see my little boy, who cried, poor fellow, at farmer Clarke's hard-heartedness,

heartedness, came himself, and brought me relief, and promised to allow me something weekly : but don't tell, Miss, for the parish would take off my allowance, if they knew it : he has promised, too, to send my Billy to school."

Harriet repeated these praises with an air of exultation ; yet hesitated to inform me, that the subject of them overtook her, and had conversed with her all the way home : " I ought not, perhaps, to have suffered it, Madam," said she ; " but, while I was mustering up courage to send him away, he engaged me in chat that greatly diverted me from my purpose. He talked of you, Madam ; and interested me so much, that I was here almost without perceiving it.—You can't think what a high opinion he has of you :—" And was he really," said I, " *so mal adroit*, as to entertain one lady with the praises of another :—Do you know,

know, my dear, that whatever he said of me, it was you he flattered the most by this proceeding. "Indeed," said she, "if he thought the praise of my friend the most pleasing topic he could choose, he did me only justice—it was not flattery: but shall I tell you what he said?"—Sly gypsey.—
"No, Harriet; if he only spoke of me, I am content not to hear your conversation."
"He asked me about the ball, Ma'am."—
"And did you tell him that you saw no one there worthy to be compared with him?" "No, indeed," said she, smiling, and blushing; "I know not if I have not said so, once too often, even to you."—
"What then did you tell him?" I merely said, "that it did not answer my expectations—that I should have been much better entertained at home:" he then cautioned me against something he called fastidiousness; yet added, he did not wonder Mrs. Willars's society should spoil me for most others.

others. You are singularly favored, Miss Harriet, said he, both by nature and fortune, in making such a friend.

We met my uncle at the gate, who desired him to take his stray quite home, and accept of some refreshment for his trouble: he complied only with the first part of the invitation; for finding nobody in the parlour, he did not stay to sit down. He desired his best respects to you, and went away; and that was all, I assure you; I could not help it, indeed, Ma'am. "Well, my dear, there is no harm, except Mr. Deacon should think any; and you will soon hear of it, if he does; for he is coming to tea." In effect, he came with inquiries after his fair partner's health, whose distant looks, and manners, do not discourage him. He is, indeed, encouraged from every quarter.

Sunday, Sept. 20.

My cold increafes, and affects my eyes fo much, as to make writing very painful.

Heaven preferve my Edward!

Monday, Sept. 21.

Mr. Thomas will not foon forgive me, for refufing to point out the fpot where Sailor and I, yefterday, flarted a covey of partridges: he fays, I never deferve to eat another; and that, as far as it depends on him, I never fhall; for he will give away every thing he kills all the winter. “ Juft as you pleafe, Mr. Thomas, every one has their fancy, you know: you like to kill the game—I, to fee it fly.” “ You like to eat too, I thinks,” faid he; “ I’m zure, you
and

and zisters, and t'other wimen, ate up a
eark among ye, the second day of shoot-
ng, and never left me any thing, but what
was mashed with shot."—"Well, it may
be so, Mr. Thomas; I am, perhaps, very
nconsistent: yet let me beg the chance of
one more year, for the covey I discovered,
f it be only for your own sake."

Mr. Thomas went off muttering, that
he poacher would have them, if he did
not.

Monday, Sept. 28.

I have had an inflammation in my eyes,
all the last week, which has prevented me
either reading, writing, or working: and
was forbid to go much into the air.—
Harriet has been my nurse and constant
companion: she has read to me, chatted

with me, and, in short, afforded me all the relief my situation would admit of: for I have suffered cruelly at intervals.

Mr. Ewer never failed a day to come with inquiries after my health; and always enlivened our little society, when he could make one of it: but he is got acquainted in the village, and is now much engaged. I am glad to use my fingers and eyes; but both grow weary. Harriet will transcribe for me a little ode, the fruit of my idleness and leisure; which will, at least, serve to convince my Edward, that in sickness, as in health, my heart is with him.

I suppose you arrived at ———

ODE TO CYNTHIA.

Pale regent of the midnight sky,
Whose soften'd beam allows the gaze
Of the wan lover's fixed eye,
As by thy favoring glade he strays.

Say,

Say, does thy noon my love delight;
Does he salute thy rising ray?
And woo thy mild auspicious light,
To muse on me— Sweet Cynthia, say?

Does he prefer thy sober reign,
To all the charms of perfect day,
In that soft clime, whose jocund train,
Rejoice in Sol's still soft'ring ray?

Where his warm beam delights to glow,
Reflected in each laughing eye;
In age, as youth, glad spirits flow,
Sweet produce of a cloudless sky.

Does he prefer thee, gentle queen,
To the gay taper's mimic glare,
That lightens up the festive scene,
Where sparkle all the blythe and fair?

For, dear to Love's abstracted thought,
Is the soft radiance of thine eye;
Thy silver horn with calmness fraught,
Wild joys and frantic pleasures fly.

And, oh, congenial to my mind,
Thy rays their timid lustre shed;—
To tender sadness oft inclin'd,
How soothing the pale day they spread!”

Oh! in this hour of still repose,
When all the azure vault serene,
Thy lovely face unclouded shews,
Say, does my Edward view the scene?

Oh, let me think this pensive eye,
On the same object fixt with mine;
Fond fancy, cruel truth supply,
Then, Cynthia, in thy world we join.

ODE A CYNTHIE.

De la nuit pâle souveraine,
Que l'amour invoque tout bas,
Lorsque ta lueur incertaine,
Vers le plaisir guide ses pas :

Satisfais mon ame inquiète ;
Divine Cynthia, apprends-moi,
Si l'objet que mon cœur regrette,
Te prend pour témoin de sa foi.

Veille-t-il, quand ton règne sombre
Occupe a route des cieux ?
Aime-t-il à fuivre des yeux,
Le cours que tu traces dans l'ombre ?

Errant dans ces climats lointains,
Où dardent les traits de ton frère,
Sait-il à sa rive lumière,
Préferer tes feux argentins ?

Ou, dans la pompe d'une fête,
Fuit-il l'éclat de cent flambeaux,
Pour s'égarer sous les berceaux,
Où perce ta clarté discrète ?

Car l'amant fidèle à ses vœux,
En proie aux ennins de l'absence ;
E'prouve la douce influence,
De es rayons mystérieux.

De son souffle à peine Zéphire,
Trouble le calme qui te suit ;
Et ta marche sœurble interdire,
Les faux plaisirs et le vain bruit.

D'une tendre mélancolie,
Mon cœur savoure les attraita,
Quand, dans le silence et le frais,
Ton orbe à rêver me convie.

Souverin d'un epoux chéri,
Rein alors ne rient te distraire ;
En fixant l'Astre qui l'éclaire,
Je crois me rapprocher de lui.

Ah ! Quelle consolante idée !
Oui, Cynthia, en songeant à moi,
De mon, Edward, la pensée,
S'élance au même instant vers toi.

Poursuivant l'aimable chimère,
Nos ames franchissent les airs ;
Et des deux bouts de l'univers,
Vont se réunir dans ta sphère.

Tuesday, Sept. 29.

I have more verses for you, Edward; the above is not all. Harriet sat by me transcribing the lines which you will find annexed; and of which here follows the history: The only evening of my confinement that I was left quite alone, there being a supper at Mr. Figgins's, to which she had received an invitation, and which I quite insisted upon her accepting, as all the family and neighbourhood were to be there. I had not, perhaps, succeeded; though, with all my positiveness, if a very plain hint, from Mr. Peterson, had not backed me:—Unused to oppose authority from that quarter, my young friend left me, reluctantly, to my own reflections: I had leisure for them; for the party lasted till two in the morning, and I did not retire to rest much sooner.

I thought

I thought of our last conversation, my Edward: do you recollect telling me, that you had entertained an idea of setting off privately, without bidding me farewell; in order, you said, to spare us both the pangs of parting: you know how I reprobated this scheme; and how cruel it appeared to me. I have not altered my opinion, as you will see by what follows; where I have thrown it into verse. It was the occupation of that evening's solitude. I suppose you had executed your project.

PARTING.

And was it then my grief to spare,
That fullen and reserv'd you were;
That thus unkind, you stole away,
Nor hinted 'twas the parting day?
Alas, you for my heart mistake,
If thus you left me for its sake.

When friendship joins each kindred heart,
It is a cruel task to part;
Yet, if by fate's severe decree,
Such torture must inflicted be:
Better to wound in this respect,
By tenderness, than by neglect.

To me, the tender starting tear,
 The sigh that heaves the breast sincere;
 Gentle complaints, reproaches kind,
 Hands severing, hearts more closely join'd,
 The last embrace—the parting pray'r—
 Sweet in their sadness, soothing are.

While fancy dwells on such a scene,
 The pangs of absence feel less keen;
 Each word, each look, is ponder'd o'er,
 As miser's prize their treasure store:
 The heart will swell, the eyes may flow,
 But 'tis with "luxury of woe."

But, oh! without one parting look,
 Inhumanly to be forlook—
 Deprives my heart of all relief,
 And gives new bitterness to grief:
 And should we never meet again,
 Will heighten to despair my pain.

Wednesday, 30.

Miss Peterfons have prevailed, notwithstanding their father's dislike to red coats, and his displeasure at the encouragement given by his eldest daughter to one
 at

at the late ball, to be permitted to venture, once more, among them, by accepting Mrs. Parkitt's invitation to spend some days at her house: they went yesterday. Mrs. Peterfon was engaged on a visit to a neighbour, and the gentlemen both absent; when Mr. Ewer called in about the hour of tea. Observing me unusually dejected—for your silence, my Edward, hung heavy on my spirits—he inquired of Harriet, in a whisper, if Mrs. Willars had heard bad news? When informed that my anxiety arose from not hearing at all, he undertook to reason me out of it, and pretty well succeeded, in convincing me, that it was barely possible, and highly improbable, that I could have letters from you this month, or even next.—“While the coolness of my mind suggests these reflections, Madam,” to me—he added, “I do not at all wonder they should have escaped the agitation of yours: I cannot blame your uneasiness: indeed, I do most

sincerely sympathise with you in it; for next to the misery of being unhappily married, the greatest is, I believe, to be separated when happily so." "I think," said Harriet, "between the chance of being unhappily married, or parted, if happy, it is best not to marry at all." "I must borrow Dr. Johnson's words to answer you, young lady," returned Mr. Ewer—"Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures." "And don't you allow, sir," rejoined Harriet, "that there is more point than truth in them: I am sure I am very happy, and have many pleasures; and have not you, sir?" I know not why this artless question should have disconcerted Mr. Ewer, (yet it evidently did;) he blushed, paused; and, after some hesitation, at length answered—"I should be both insensible and ungrateful to say I have no pleasures, in the very moment of enjoyment, and to those who confer them: I have great pleasure in your society, believe

lieve me, ladies; and am often indebted to you for a forgetfulness of pain, which, though transient, is a great relief."—Before we could answer this compliment, our pastoral beaux arrived with Mr. Deacon: the latter had taken liquor enough to animate his hope and his courage; he possessed himself of Mr. Ewer's chair, who had risen at his entrance, and drew it close to Harriet; and, staring her rudely in the face, called her his little sweetheart, in the tone of the utmost familiarity. Harriet blushed, frowned, and attempted to escape to another seat, in vain; her persecutor was too much elevated, besides encouraged by her relations, to desist. Mr. Ewer gave him some indignant glances; and, perhaps, suffering too severely at witnessing distress which he could not relieve, abruptly arose, and went away, in spite of Mr. Peterson's repeated invitations to stay supper. Harriet had not the liberty of returning while her agreeable

agreeable suitor remained. Mrs. Peter-son, who came home to supper, signified her pleasure that she should stay. I stayed too to keep her company: the glass circulated briskly after supper: her swain drank himself stupid, and she was left at peace; but it was past midnight before we retired. Farewell.

Thursday, Oct. 1.

Mrs. Peter-son fears I shall be dull, or, as she calls it, *unkind*, in the absence of her daughters. She often proposes schemes of amusement, which I usually decline; however, a fishing party being planned this morning, and the weather proving favourable, I readily agreed to accompany my young friend, who seemed eager to see it. Mr. Thomas Peter-son, and a servant, with casting nets and baskets, led the way: we followed

followed along the meadows, till Mrs. Peterson finding the grass wet, quitted the party: Harriet and I were shod against such trifling inconveniencies; and she would by no means consent to let us accompany her home. While the sportsmen followed the course of the river through a narrow path, rather too difficult for us, we seated ourselves on some stumps of trees, whence we could see them at once, and admire the winding of it, which just on this spot is extremely beautiful. The opposite bank has a narrow margin of meadow; it then rises in a gentle slope, the top of which is covered with woods, now richly clad in all the varied tints of Autumn, and forming a beautiful contrast to the vivid green below. — Some sheep, with fleeces of a snowy whiteness, were feeding on the flanting side of the hill, and the sound of a flute, brought near by a gentle breeze, and the water, rendered the scene completely Arcadian.

" And

“ And as I walk, sweet music, breathe

“ Above, about, or underneath ;

“ Sent by some spirit for mortals’ good,

“ Or the unseen genius of the wood.”

“ Where is the shepherd ?” said Harriet, who, I believe, expected to have seen one in all the elegance of pastoral simplicity, with a crook ornamented with ribbons and flowers. “ He is yonder my dear,” said I, “ pointing to a little ragged boy lying on the ground ; who certainly was what she inquired for, though such a blot in the picture had escaped her notice :— “ That the shepherd, Mrs. Willars !” said she, “ that is a Shropshire shepherd indeed. Oh, how you break the spell ! but I still hear the flute ; there is another not far off.”

Mr. Thomas now reminded us of him, whom we had almost forgotten, with a loud holla, that he had got a perch or two pounds ;

pounds; and impatiently calling to us to come and see his sport. I took my companion's arm, and led her, reluctant, from this enchanting spot; we traversed the long grass through an unbeaten, disagreeable part, to join the fishermen, for they were going another way home; and Mr. Thomas would not stir a step to meet us. I should have left him and his fish to have sunk or swam together, and have returned by the way we came, had not another consideration led me to prefer that which he took, as it led from the sound of the music, and of course from the musician, whom, I could not but guess at, and feared to expose my young friend to meet, her heart thus softened, and her imagination warmed, and thus prepared for the most dangerous impressions. We followed our leaders, whose baskets were well filled with fish; and saw them throw the net several times unsuccessfully. Mr. Thomas now grew tired, and proposed returning,
to

to which we readily agreed. On our return, passing a turnip field after we had left the river, on the side of a coppice, Sailor, who is always of our walking parties, started a fine cock pheasant. Mr. Thomas and his man made a point, as their dogs might have done: the former cursed his stupid head for going a fishing the first day of pheasant shooting; and, ordering his man to mark the bird, set down his basket; and, without the least apology, ran off in pursuit of a gun. In the mean time the bird rose again, and directed its flight to the wood.—The servant, loaded as he was with the net, took to his heels to watch its direction; and we were left, with the basket of fish and Sailor, to shift as we could.

We stood looking at each other in a sort of ridiculous distress, which ended, however, in a fit of laughter.—“To be sure they will come back and see for their fish,

Ma'am,”

Ma'am," said Harriet.—“ For their fish, perhaps, they may, my dear,” said I; “ for we seem to be quite out of the question.” We then seated ourselves on the grass, and waited patiently a full half hour, expecting their return: unwilling to leave our morning’s sport to the mercy of the first passenger that was able to carry it.—We were in a sort of dell, between two rising grounds, and could see nothing beyond. Harriet went on all sides to *reconnoitre*, but could discover no creature of whom to inquire our way, or solicit assistance. In this dilemma, we agreed that any thing was better than sitting still to take cold; we, therefore, took the basket between us, and made towards the river, in order to regain the path we knew. Our load warmed as well as wearied us; and we were often obliged to stop and rest; in one of these pauses, just as we were within knowledge, Sailor, who was jumping and caressing, as suddenly sprang away, as if he had started some other

other

other game. The faithful creature ran to greet an acquaintance, who always takes notice of him; it was Mr. Ewer, who soon joined us; and, after the first compliments, he expressed his surprise to see us so incumbered. "Who has loaded two fair ladies so unconscionably?" said he—"Have you discovered some poacher's hoard? for, to be sure, you never caught all this fish yourselves?" We were obliged to explain how we came in charge of it, and to accept of his assistance to convey it home, which he absolutely insisted upon: he hoisted his pack, and we set forward once more. "My scheme, on leaving home, was to have fished too, ladies," said he; "but I was beguiled by my flute, and have been sauntering on the banks of the river, and playing old tunes to beguile old sorrows, the whole morning through.—I was, however, on the point of adjusting my tackle to begin, when my good genius directed me to this meadow, for a more convenient

convenient sport, where so much happiness awaited me.”

Mr. Ewer is certainly nothing less than handsome ; yet, at this moment, I almost thought him so. Pleasure flushed his pale cheeks, and sparkled in his expressive eye : he tripped lightly before us ; and absolutely carried his load with a grace.— His countenance was the only one that brightened at this unexpected and opportune rencontre : indeed all were pleased, to the very dog : and who could blame us ? As for Mr. Ewer, his harmony of spirits broke out in an extempore song, which he struck up with infinite humour, as follows :—

Shepherds, I have lost my love,
Have you seen my Thomas ;
In the path, hard by the grove,
He has wander'd from us.

We with him our home forfook,
Near yon misty mountain ;

Here's

Here's the fish the shepherd took
At the river's fountain.

Never shall he see them more,
Until his returning;
Should he find the dinner o'er,
Joy will change to mourning.

Thus entertained, our walk did not seem long: we reached home without seeing any thing of our company, or meeting farther adventure; and Mr. Ewer having deposited his load, took his leave.

Mrs. Peterfon heard our relation without either surprise or concern; she contented herself with hoping that Tom would bring home the bird: he was a dear boy, she said, after game. Mr. P——, on his return from a neighbouring market, was equally easy about it: he seemed to think it quite a matter of course, that Tom should leave his cousin and me to chance, for any whim that crost his noddle; and that Mr. Ewer should always be at hand,
with

with good nature and politeness, to extricate us : thus the one will have no thanks, the other no blame.

Our excursion had, however, given us keen appetites to our dinner. Adieu.

Friday, Oct. 2.

I forgot to mention that the news of the Squire's death was premature : he has had a severe stroke of the palsy, which, perhaps, he may recover ; at any rate, it appears that he is in no immediate danger. This news has been current some days in the village ; it is now placed out of all doubt, by the arrival of Mr. Amrode, his steward, who is come to collect the rents ; an office Mr. Allendon usually did himself, at this season, when in health.

The

The steward dined here to-day ; he is a man of good sense and knowledge of the world : he talked much, and to the purpose.—He has, however, given considerable alarm by prognostics of a scarcity of corn, of which certainly there is not the smallest appearance here ; however, as he insists it is the case almost every where else, and speaks with assurance of the precautions taken by government, Mr. Peterfon is half persuaded to send no more corn to market, lest he should want it hereafter. If every body else is of the same mind, an artificial scarcity may probably be produced, even though there may be no real failure in the crops.

I tremble, my dear Edward, at the probable consequences of these, I hope, groundless precautions. It was so the revolution was produced in France.

I am called—Adieu till to-morrow.

Saturday,

Saturday, Oct. 3.

The wind blew hard last night.—I lay awake, and thought of my Edward: my ideas flowed into rhyme; and here they follow:—

While heaving billows rock that aching head,
And frequent squalls thy troubled slumbers rend;
Is not thy spirit in fond visions led
To the lone cottage, and the distant friend?

Safe from the tempest, and the whelming tide,
That shelter'd cottage stands securely low;
There ease, and liberty, and peace reside,
And tranquil pleasures round spontaneous grow.

Ah, dost thou ne'er regret past happy days,
Nor give one sigh to this receding shore!
Ah! dost thou never say, in Pindar's lays,
"Those silver sands of time shall glide no more?"

Here, safe from storms, thy tender friend is cast,
Her quiet state from cares, from tumults free—
Save, when as now deep-howls the angry blast,
Her anxious spirit beats with fears for thee.

Then fancy paints the frowning sky all dark,
The tempest howling thro' each tatter'd sail;
The exhausted mariner, the shatter'd bark,
Driv'n by the fury of the merc'less gale.

Methinks I hear the shrieks of deep despair,
And 'midst loud thunders crackling timbers fall;
And view thee stedfast still, the danger dare,
Assist the weak—cheer, and encourage all.

But hence, dire images of wat'ry graves,
Haunt not my visions, nor my soul affright;
Paint me sweet Fancy, clear transparent waves,
And Indian sun-shine ever glowing bright.

Oh, far be danger from my wand'ring friend,
With prosp'rous gales be still his canvas fraught;
His health, his safety, I to heav'n commend,
“In all the tender luxury of thought.”

Sunday, Oct. 4.

At Mrs. Peterfon's request we called on Miss Grove, this morning, on our return from the duties of the day; and had the pleasure of meeting the Miss Summers, already mentioned, as visiting there. She is pretty, very genteelly drest, and altogether of so elegant an appearance, that I
was

was astonished beyond expression.—When, to Mrs. Peterson's question after the health of some acquaintance, she answered, literally thus—"I does not know, indeed; I hasn't zeed her this fortnight." Accustomed as I am to hear my poor mother tongue clipped and frittered, I confess to you, my dear Edward, such an answer, from so smart a lady, almost overcame my gravity: however, I might have laughed without offence; for Harriet was the only one present who would have suspected the cause: such is the negligence of grammatical propriety connived at here.

Miss Summers was very earnest to prevail upon Harriet to be of a hunting party, which is to take place on Tuesday; the latter pleaded want of skill in horsemanship, fear, dislike of the sport, and several less weighty objections, in vain.—Miss Summers was infinitely dexterous in parrying them all: Miss Grove offered a very

safe and gentle nag of her own; and her brother promised to be her trusty squire, to ride by her, and never hard.—All this would, perhaps, have been ineffectual, had not Miss Summers declared, that if Miss Harriet would not go, she too must give up the plan; for she did not choose to be the only female. Harriet's good nature could not resist this plan; and the party was agreed on, with her aunt's entire approbation.

We were rising to take leave, when who should arrive but Harriet's beau, the *elegant* Mr. Deacon?—She attempted to slip by, but he seized her hand: "Stop a bit, Miss; why we hasn't zeed one another this ere so long," said he, "as he pulled her back; and forcibly seating her, drew a chair close to her side." Mrs. Peterson, of her own accord, followed his example; and we all resumed our places. "Now that's right, Madam Peterson," said the youth,

youth, "that's as it should be; if you had gone away just as I comed in, 'twould have looked as thof I frighted you like; and I hopes I beent so ugly as all that comes to, neither." "Mrs. Peterson assured him he was a desperate good-looking gentleman; and that it always did her good to see him." "Hark, what your aunt says, Miss," said the swain; "and she's a main good judge, I assure you." Harriet was constrained to smile; but her countenance quickly fell, when she understood that he was to be of the hunting party. "I'll take care of you myself, Miss," said he; "leave Grove and Miss Summers. I have a mare that would make the prettiest woman's nag in the county; but I keeps her for my wife when I marries: Do you know who she's to be, Miss?" said he, "addressing her in a loud whisper." "Your wife will be a happy woman, Deacon," said Mr. Grove.—"Ay, and a pretty one

too—won't she, Miss?" answered Mr. D. still addressing Harriet.

I could have enjoyed this scene, which was highly comic, if the part my poor Harriet was constrained to act in it, had not been so painful to her: on that account I endeavoured to put an end to it, by reminding Mrs. Peterson of the hour. I succeeded in prevailing upon her to depart; but mist my principal aim; for Mr. Deacon was in spirits, and not to be repulsed so easily.—He insisted on attending us home; and forced Harriet to lean on his arm. Mrs. Peterson invited him to dine; an offer which he most readily accepted. The younger Mr. Peterson was not at home; the elder, who never puts himself out of his way for any one, disappeared immediately after dinner, and left Mr. Deacon entirely to the company of the ladies, where he soon began to feel very awkward.

Mrs.

Mrs. Peterfon having exhausted her whole stock of questions, remained silent. Harriet was too ill at ease to speak ; and, by way of honouring the scene, I determined not to utter a syllable. Poor Deacon damned and coughed ; and the more he studied for something to say, the more he was at a loss. After a silence of some length, I broke it, by asking of Harriet, “ if she wore socks ? ” in allusion to a ridiculous story I have somewhere heard of a lover, who, the first time he was left alone with his mistress, could find nothing else to say to her. Harriet, who knew to what I alluded, was provoked to a fit of risibility, in which I joined so heartily, that we should fairly have laughed the enemy off the field, if his protectress, Mrs. Peterfon, had not thought of a walk. She proposed to go through the wood to the Plough, where she hoped to meet her husband, and make him treat us with a syllabub. Mr. Deacon eagerly seconded the

motion ; no one objects : and behold us once again on our march ; not, however, exactly in the same order as before ; for Harriet took my arm, and disappointed her beau. As the path would admit but of two a breast, he kept, however, as close to her as possible ; now before, now behind us, never offering the least assistance to Mrs. Peterson, who flaved up the hill after us heartily, and soon fatigued ; but determined against giving up a scheme of her own proposing.

I was lost in a pleasant kind of reverie, attending to the rustling of the leaves, and admiring the beauty of the declining sun, of which we caught, now and then, a view through breaks in the trees ; when Mr. Deacon offered me a penny for my thoughts. “ Mr. Deacon imagines your thoughts are of no more worth than his own, Madam,” said Harriet.—“ I can tell you, Miss,” said the swain ; “ my thoughts are often worth

worth a great deal of money.—Why, I was just then thinking about a tree, just like that there; a good old oak, Miss, that, I dare say, will fetch me twenty or thirty good pounds; and 't isn't the only one, Miss, by many: my thoughts are worth as much, mayhap, as another's." Any further discussion, on the value of Mr. Deacon's thoughts, was here interrupted by the arrival of another knight, whom you will, perhaps, guess was Mr. Ewer.—He had been to the house, with an intention of drinking tea with us; and having being informed there of the course we had taken, he set out to join our walk. His compliments paid, he offered his arm to Mrs. Peterson, who condescended to accept it. His attentions did not stop here; his conversation was addressed to her ideas:—he talked of the dairy, the poultry yard, and the village news, like an old housewife; except that he contrived, even on such a theme, to be entertaining. Mr. Deacon,

you would have thought, might have contrived to have seemed at home here; but he is one of those awkward mortals who never appears so any where.

At length we arrived at the spot, where Mr. Ewer's appearance had been so opportune for Mr. Peterfon. We all shuddered to observe, how much it was remote from any probability of assistance from chance passengers; it being in the very thickest part of the wood, where the path is so little beaten, that Mrs. Peterfon's apron was very ill-treated by the thorns, which, in many places, almost obstruct the passage. Harriet was unwilling to move from the spot; and made Mr. Ewer repeat every particular of the affray, and point out their exact positions. It was still visible, where he had broke a way through the thicket to hasten to the assistance of Mr. Peterfon; and the underwood was trodden down where the scuffle had happened:

happened : all this was deeply interesting to Harriet ; but Mr. Deacon betrayed every symptom of impatience at the delay and the cause of it ; and Mrs. Peterfon wished herself safe out of such a nasty *unkind* place ; wondering, at the same time, how Mr. Ewer could ever venture there alone.

“ It is my favourite walk, Madam,” said he, “ I always was partial to it ; but since the day that I was so happy as to be useful to Mr. Peterfon, I resort to it for relief ; and never enter it, without a sensation of delight.—So many pleasant ideas are connected with these shades, that every tree seems a tender friend, extending its arms, and whispering comfort to my wounded spirit. Here I bring my flute, my book, and sometimes my pen : I cut letters upon the rind of the trees—I bring food to their melodious inhabitants, who have almost lost their fears of me. I grieve

to see them lose the shelter of their thick foliage.

“ The falling leaves of Autumn warnings bring,

“ That death and Winter are too near allied.”

But I beg pardon, I weary you with my romance.” Mrs. Peterson observed, that she had always heard he was an odd gentleman: and Mr. Deacon looked as if he thought him mad.

When we arrived at the Plough, Mr. Peterson had left it about half an hour: we returned not, however, through the wood, but across the common. Our beaux stayed tea; and soon after Mr. Ewer took his leave.

Mr. Deacon, who seemed to have stayed to see him out, immediately followed.

Monday,

Monday, Oct. 5.

Mr. Ewer called early this morning, to beg to be admitted as our Chevalier for the day; as all the tenants dined, by appointment, at the Great House: and we were likely to have no other. Mrs. Peterfon, whose prejudices against him have given way to his engaging manners, invited him to stay dinner; and he consented, on condition, that we would permit him to escort us to his cottage, in the afternoon, to take a bachelor's treat of tea with him: this being settled, he remained our guest.

We spent the morning very agreeably; for while Mrs. Peterfon was absent on her household affairs, he read and chatted with us: he has always a book in his pocket: this time it was Cowper's Task—"which I did not lend you, ladies," said he; "because
cause

cause I meant to have the pleasure of reading it with you." He was in the right, my Edward; for, besides the advantage of his observations, he reads so well, so naturally, with so much grace and feeling, that if so charming a work was capable of being improved, it had certainly been so in his delivery.—

" Oh ! *mornings*, worthy of the gods, exclaim'd

" The Sabine bard—oh ! *mornings*, I reply,

" More to be priz'd, and coveted than yours,

" As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths,

" That I and mine, and those we love enjoy."—COWPER.

The afternoon proving very serene and beautiful, we set out soon after dinner, in order to enjoy a long walk, by a way we did not know, but which Mr. Ewer recommended as extremely pleasant: in effect it was so; for it leads along the shelving skirts of the wood, which we did not enter, having no occasion, at this temperate

rate season, to seek the relief of its shade : all the way commands a most beautiful view of the river and the valley beneath.

Mrs. Peterson being out of breath with so much ascending, we sat down to relieve her on the slope of the hill. Mr. Ewer was pointing out some beauties in the prospect to our observation, when a woman on horseback passed in the lane, just beneath where we were seated ; she was incumbered with butter baskets, and certainly neither young nor handsome. Sailor, who had been courting in a field on the opposite side, dashed suddenly through the edge just at the horse's head, which alarming the beast, he leapt awkwardly on one side, and threw his rider ; the poor creature screamed violently, and lay without motion. We screamed also, and Mr. Ewer flew to her assistance : he lifted her up with the utmost tenderness, and some difficulty—before we could reach the spot he had helped her

her on her horse, which she seemed unable to guide ; he took the bridle with one hand, and supporting her with the other, called out to us that he would see her to a place of safety, and overtake us before we could reach farmer Clarke's.

Mrs. Peterfon was not pleased with his desertion of us ; she desired never to hear of Mr. Ewer as a well-bred man again, for that she never saw any thing so rude in all her life ; just as if, said she, the horse did not know his way home. There were some of the party, however, that saw the matter in another light. Harriet has none of the selfishness that claims exclusive attention ; she seemed to observe with satisfaction, that Mr. Ewer was always beloved where the greatest distress was the call—she stood riveted to the spot as long as he continued in sight, her eyes glistening with the tears of tenderness and admiration.

I perhaps judge for feelings by my own, Edward, for it was an interesting picture to a kindred mind, and to many it would perhaps have been a ridiculous one. Mr. Ewer leading cautiously the sorry looking beast, watching its steps, and every moment looking round to observe how the poor woman bore the motion. Even Mrs. Peterfon was betrayed into involuntary applause—"One would think," said she, "it was his mother." As they now turned an angle of the lane, and we lost sight of them, we pursued our route, and arrived without difficulty at the farm house; where Mrs. Clarke, with her best tea things set out, was ready to receive us. When she heard of our adventure, she persuaded us to have our tea without waiting for Mr. Ewer; for she said, if the woman who had met with the accident was old Dame Pratt, as she supposed, she lived a long way off, and it might be late before he returned. Mrs. Peterfon, who complained of thirst, was eager to follow
her

her advice, it was of course adopted, and immediately after she proposed returning, alleging that it might be late before Mr. Ewer came back; that there was no moon, that she should be afraid to return in the dark without a man; and several other good reasons, which led me to suspect a latent motive, of which she herself was perhaps unconscious:—to mortify Mr. Ewer, and make him repent his desertion of us—if that was her view, she succeeded completely, for we reached home without being overtaken by him.

We were however hardly seated, and the hearth in a comfortable blaze, before he arrived, breathless, and all in a dew. “I am so concerned and so disappointed, ladies,” said he; “I had flattered myself that you would not have hurried away so abruptly;—could you possibly doubt of my making all the haste in my power, in order, at least, to have returned in time to have seen you home,

home, if I was denied the enjoyment of your company for half an hour at my hermitage?"—"I did not doubt it, I assure you, Mr. Ewer," said I—"but *I* did," said Mrs. Peterson, interrupting me, "I concluded you were gone off with the fair lady you pickt up on the road, and that it was of no use to stay." As she left the room, Mr. Ewer said, "Mrs. Peterson seems determined not to admit my excuses; indeed she is the only one of the company, to whom I should think it necessary to offer any upon such an occasion; to you, ladies, I should plead for pity rather than pardon, considering the disappointment I have suffered. It was impossible to leave the poor creature, whom I had undertaken to escort; you saw how very gently I was obliged to lead her, and even that motion she could hardly bear; but groaned often so pitioufly, that I was frequently obliged to halt to give her relief. I met nobody to whom I could confide her, and we were
certainly

certainly above an hour in going a mile and a half—when arrived at her home, a very small farm on the uttermost verge of the parish, we found no person to help us; there was only her daughter and grandchildren, all too young to be of any service. When I helped her from her horse, I found that she had broken her arm, and was besides in so much pain that I apprehended some inward hurt; in this dilemma, the poor wretch groaning, and her children weeping over her in helpless distress, I could think of no better expedient than to mount the old jade of a horse, and ride to M— for the village surgeon: I met with him at home, and he promised to set out without delay. I made the poor beast smother in hopes of reaching farmer Clarke's before you had left it, but had not the good fortune to succeed:—mortified beyond expression, I made all possible haste, still flattering myself that at least I should overtake you.

you. Sure you walked very fast, for Mrs. Clarke said you had not long been gone."

My aunt was afraid, Sir, said Harriet, and rather timid, or, I assure you, we should have been glad to have stayed, to have known how the poor woman bore her journey.—Well, said he, if you two ladies think me sufficiently punished for my involuntary desertion of you, and assure me that you do not add your displeasure, I will endeavour to make myself easy, and hurry back to see that care is taken of the poor animal whom I rode so hard ; and had only time to order a place in the stable:—I shall see that he has some corn and is well rubbed down, and then send him home. We both assured him of our entire approbation, nay admiration of his proceeding ; and he left us requesting that each would give her hand in token of peace : we complied, my Edward, and I am sure you will

will say we did right ; for my part I gave both my hands, saying, with Sycorax,

“ I will cast two eyes of pity on thee,

“ I will stretch two hands of pardon to thee,”

You see how I dispose of your hands, in your absence, my love, yet I am sure you will not disapprove it.

Tuesday, Oct. 6.

“ O day, the fairest sure that ever rose!

* * * * *

“ Go wing'd with rapture take thy happy flight,

“ And give each future morn a tincture of thy white.”

For thou hast brought me tidings of my Edward of rather a recent date, on the 20th of September ; thou wert then well, my love, in good spirits, and thinking of thy Sophy. My journal fails me at that period, for I was indisposed ; but it was about that time that I planned my ode to Cynthia, adding

adding the two last verses, one sweet evening, that she was at full;—how singularly delightful is it, that you should have had nearly the same ideas, at the same time, and have addressed them to the same sweet Planet!—Did you think of the divided lovers mentioned in the Spectator, Edward, who had agreed always to look at the moon at the same hour? But good wits jump, they say, so likewise do tender faithful hearts. Now is my joy a little incomplete, because my Harriet is not at hand to share it with me. I anticipate the pleasure of her kind heart at her return. My altered looks will tell her all; for you cannot imagine how, within this hour, I am grown plump and fresh.

Here I was called to Mr. Ewer; he begged ten thousand pardons for interrupting me; it was much against my will, indeed, Madam, said he, that you were disturbed. I merely called to enquire after your health,
which

which I hope did not suffer from the delay caused by my unfortunate desertion of you yesterday ; and to acquaint you that the innocent cause of it is in a fair way of doing well, which, I am sure, will give you pleasure. I had a glimpse of Miss Harriet, as I was coming from thence ; but how charmingly you look !—I held out my letter in triumph, Edward, and told him how lately you were safe and well—he gave me joy with an air of interest and delight ; and assured me, that you must, long 'ere this, have reached your destination. No haven of rest for my Edward, who must still be cruising on the seas : there at least, however, I may hope to hear from him, and I shall now anxiously wait the arrival of my packet.

We spent the evening at Mr. Grove's, for I was in far too good spirits to refuse Mrs. Peterson's proposal to go there in quest

quest of Harriet: we found her seated by her beau, and looking pale and fatigued; she, however, presently caught the reflection of her friend's countenance, and quitting her place precipitately, before Deacon had time to prevent her, seated herself on half my chair, while I whispered her the good news. Mrs. Peterson told it aloud to the company, who questioned me concerning your situation with more curiosity than feeling or good manners; and it is not their fault if I am not extremely uneasy; their doubts and fears may take effect in due time, but just then I was too happy to be disturbed by them.

Wednesday, October 7.

Harriet was with me betimes this morning, and related the particulars of her yesterday's entertainment. It was the first time she ever saw any thing of the kind,

and she enjoyed the onset very much: the morning was serene and clear, her horse pleasant and tractable; and the whole party, consisting of almost all the young men in the neighbourhood, with Miss Summers and herself, in high spirits and good humour. They cantered sociably together till the dogs found a hare. Puffs doubled and turned as usual, and, after leading them about an hour's very pleasant chase, at length took to an inclosed ground, where such as were not lively or ardent enough to leap the hedge, sought an entrance by coasting round it. Among the first of these was Harriet, whose spirits, all in motion with the exercise she had taken, had lost all sense of fear—presently determined, she rode forward alone, and was out of sight of the rest when the poor persecuted little animal darted through the hedge, and, spent with fatigue and affright, fell motionless at her horse's feet. Harriet, whose anxiety, unlike that of the
other

other hunters, was to see it escape, checked her nag, till she saw it recover, and make through an opposite hedge towards the wood. With trembling eagerness she watched it up the ascent, whence it might be seen at some distance, and particularly from the field which she had left the company just entering. She heard the dogs and huntsmen advancing full speed.—“Have you seen the hare, Miss Harriet? she came this way,” was called from twenty mouths at once.

Harriet made no answer, but could not keep her anxious eye from betraying its track; it had not yet reached the covert; and a large greyhound was gaining so fast upon it, that its escape seemed an impossibility. The company shouted, and Harriet screamed, when, just entering the wood, the dog darted on his prey; he had however over-leapt his mark, and when the sportsmen, with one accord, rushed forward to secure their prize, puss was safely sheltered in the wood.

In the first transports of Harriet's joy she set her horse off on a gallop, without any immediate aim; the beast, put upon his mettle, was not so ready to stop as to go, and carried her on much faster than she chose, or was horse-woman enough to prevent; at first she was not missed, her escape was unnoticed in the superior interest excited by that of the hare. Miss Summers was the first that noticed it. "I was so fraught, my dear," said she to her afterwards, "I could not think what was become of you."—"By George! Deacon," said Mr. Grove jun. "your sweetheart has given us the slip," and, clapping spurs to his horse, rode after her: the whole company followed, shouting and hallooing, as if they were still in pursuit of a beast rather than a lady, and seeming to think this new kind of hunting very good sport. Harriet's nag, hearing the uproar, and the other horses after him, was put upon his mettle, and galloped so fast she with difficulty kept her seat.

Mr.

Mr. Grove was now a little alarmed for her, and, requesting the rest of the company to desist their sport, rode forward alone, hoping that his sister mare would recognise her acquaintance in the horse he rode, and suffer him to join her. He was however mistaken, for the animal continued galloping, and never slackened his pace till a gate across the lane checked his further progress; he then stopped very quietly, and Harriet, a good deal alarmed, jumped off. Mr. Grove soon joined her, and, finding her pale and trembling, proposed to ask at the farm house, just beyond, for a glass of water, adding, that he knew the inhabitants. Harriet was in no condition to refuse; she suffered him to lead her to the door, which was opened to them by a young woman; she accepted her offer of a seat while the water was procured, and, entering the house, was extremely surprised to meet Mr. Ewer just coming out of it. “What the d—l brought you

here, Ewer," said Mr. Grove? "do you want a glass of water to cure the vapours too? Mr. Ewer inquired, with an air of equal surprise, if Miss Harriet was indisposed?—for this unexpected meeting had restored her colour—and, understanding what had happened, he undertook to procure her drops and water; the former of which the cottage certainly would not have afforded two days before; but they had stumbled on the very house where the poor old woman lived, whose fall from her horse had engaged Mr. Ewer's services and compassion, and it was to his care it was owing that it afforded such an article of luxury. The daughter, understanding that Harriet was an acquaintance of Mr. Ewer's, ran ten ways at once, without aim or object, but to shew her readiness to oblige. Mr. Ewer finding her in such good hands, respectfully withdrew.

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When Harriet recovered, she was anxious to see poor Dame Pratt ; her daughter led her to a room meanly but neatly furnished, where she found the patient in bed, a good deal in pain, and having some degree of fever. She inquired her circumstances, and found they were not such as to preclude the liberty of a small present. “ As it was our dog,” said she to the poor woman, “ who was the cause of your misfortune, it is doubly our duty to seek to relieve it—depend upon any assistance we can afford.”

The daughter told her that the strange gentleman from Farmer Clarke’s had engaged to pay the doctor, and had sent them variety of comfortable things—“ He’s a desperate good man, Miss,” added she ; “ they says as how that he’s poor, but none of our rich neighbours find half so much to give away.” Harriet found a
H 4 ribbon,

ribbon, which was Mr. Ewer's hat-band, upon the stairs; she brought it away very curiously wrapt up, and hastened to join her Esquire, who was impatiently calling for her. Mr. Deacon was likewise in waiting, and she once more mounted her steed, and arrived without accident at Mr. Grove's, where great part of the company dined. Mr. Deacon was officiously placed beside her, and treated like an accepted lover by all the company, except the person concerned; her distance and coolness availed her nothing, but to be treated like a child, who did not know what was proper for her. Miss Summers wondered she was out of humour at having a sweetheart, and poor Harriet was very uncomfortable till our arrival released her.

Thursday, Oct. 8.

What poor mortals are we, my dear Edward!—How slight a breath suffices to destroy

destroy the slender structure of our happiness! I, that for these last two days have trod in air, am now so oppressed, I have scarce spirits to move at all: and it is merely a newspaper paragraph, that has wrought this change, which speaks of a hurricane having done considerable damage among the buildings and shipping, where I have reason to suppose you arrived.—How weak am I!—Allowing the account to be true, and not exaggerated, it could not have reached us, if it happened since your arrival. Yet the idea, that such things are, continues to torment me.

I will stroll out with Harriet, and endeavour to shake off this heaviness.

Friday, Oct. 9.

You know, my love, I left you yesterday to walk, as a remedy for my dejection:

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it proved an effectual one: The wind was rough, and braced my nerves; and I returned a new creature.

Harriet proposed that we should take the road that led to M—, which is pleasant enough at this time of year, as her cousins were expected; and she thought it probable we might meet them. She was not disappointed in her view: we discerned old Dobbin and the chaise, at a considerable distance; and as soon as the ladies recognised us, they alighted, and joined our party. They had each new hats and riding dresses, of the newest London taste, as they informed us; for Lady Anne L—, who rules the ton at M—, had sported some exactly like them. After such authority, it would be in vain to say—the dress became neither their persons nor their station.

Miss

Miss Peterson spoke in high terms of the gaieties of M—, the parties in which they had been continually engaged, and the notice they had attracted; and both seemed to return, with reluctance, to the tranquillity of Southlands. They soon acquainted us, that they had promised to give a dance to their young friends at M—; and did not doubt of papa's ready acquiescence. Capt. Sifron inquired after you, Harriet, said Miss Peterson, by the name of the little nestler. — "He did me too much honour, cousin," returned she, "particularly as I never should have thought of inquiring after him." "Now that is downright airs, Harriet," said her cousin; "for you allowed, at the ball, that he was the handsomest man there." "Maybe so, but his beauty made so little impression on me, that I don't think I should know him again, at least in any other drefs." "That's a point may soon be determined," resumed Miss Peterson, "for

he has promised to come and see us, and I told him I could not receive him in a red coat, because papa had an aversion to the colour." "And will the colour of his coat recommend him to Mr. Bertram, cousin?" said Harriet: "Indeed my dear," said she, "he will not be consulted; I have half a mind he shall not be invited to the ball." Miss Anne now inquired if I loved dancing? I answered that I liked it very well when I was of her age, when it came in my way; but never well enough to go out of my way after it." Now that is so like Harriet," said Miss Peterson, "she is quite an old woman already: however, we shall try if we cannot put a little life into her against the ball; for her part, she liked to see young people, like young people."—Harriet answered mildly, "that she should endeavour to be like other people; she had not," she said, "the least desire to distinguish herself." In this way we reached home, where we found the remainder of the family waiting tea for us.

Miss Peterfon could hardly pay her duty to her parents, before she introduced the subject of the projected ball:—"her young friends at M— depended upon it," she said; "it would be very agreeable to Mrs. Parkill, who had shewn them so many civilities; and she had fixt it for Thursday, in the following week, if Pa had no objection." "Do as you like, child," said he, "so as you take care that all the neighbours be invited." "And where are they to be stowed, and who's to entertain them," said Mrs. Peterfon? "I say, dances indeed! in the washing week, and just at old Michaelmas, and the great hall stufft with Nancy's *myrtles* and *gerænums*: the girl's head's turn'd—I'll have no dancing here!" "But I will, wife," said Mr. Peterfon, "and I'll go this moment and invite Mr. Groves and their sister and kinswoman to come—so your servant." "Now don't stay out late Mr. Peterfon," said his wife, "when every body's tired and wants to go to bed." "I'll

“ I’ll do as I’ve a mind, I tell you,” said he, and away he went. Miss Petersons sure of their point, having gained over their father, now endeavoured to sooth their mother’s ill-humour ; her consent was out of the question ; it only remained to prevail upon her to make a merit of necessity. “ I can move my greens up stairs, for one night, Mama, said Anne, a few in each room ;” “ and the washing may be put off for one week, till the servants are a little settled,” said her sister.

Mrs. Peterson had no time to answer before Mr. Ewer entered the room ; he complimented Miss Petersons on their safe return, adding some civil things on the dangers to which their attractions might expose them, in a town so well-turned, that it put both mother and daughters into good humour ; and then apologized to Harriet, for not having come sooner to enquire after her health after hav-

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ing witnessed the consequences of her alarm on Tuesday.—“ I had letters of indispensable necessity to dispatch, Madam,” said he, “ and in default of a trusty messenger, was obliged to take them to the Post-office at M— myself, whence I am just returned.” Miss Peterson did not lose this opportunity of lamenting the many inconveniencies to which people living in the country were exposed : she wondered how any person could expose themselves to such, unless obliged by their condition in life. “ You Sir,” said she, addressing Mr. Ewer, “ who seem to have no particular business here, how can you prefer it to the town ?” “ I love the country, Madam,” said he, “ and should always prefer it, notwithstanding its inconveniencies, if I could command the choice of such society as I have met with here ; for that to me is the greatest inconvenience of a country life, Miss Peterson, that the inhabitants being thinly scattered, one can rarely choose one’s company,

pany, but must take a neighbourhood as one finds it, or live quite alone, which I am not stork enough to do ; although I dislike, in general, large companies and assemblies." " I think, said Harriet, with a numerous and pleasant family, one has society enough, and one might even dispense with neighbours, I mean for society."

Miss Peterson now turned abruptly to Mr. Ewer, and enquired if he was a dancer ; and if he would come to the ball ?—" I am no longer a dancer, Madam, said he, but if idle spectators are admitted, I shall be too happy to make one."—" Come at any rate, said Miss Anne, you make a party at cards, with papa and Mrs. Willars, who pretends her dancing days are over too." He answered with a compliment to me, and I enquired after poor Dame Pratt, who, he said, was slowly recovering. This led to Harriet's hunting adventures, who related them

them on her cousins nearly as already described, but with a grace and simplicity that interested us extremely for the poor hare: her cousins having made their observations, and said, that had they not been so agreeably engaged at M—, they should have regretted having lost the sport—retired on some business of their own—"You have relieved me from a cruel state of suspense, Miss Harriet," said Mr. Ewer, "I trembled for the poor hare: it reminds me of another poor-animal of the same species, whose fate always affects me whenever I recal it to mind.

A friend of mine, travelling some years since in Warwickshire, was informed that a real hermit inhabited a wood in that country; curiosity to see this extraordinary personage induced him to go some miles out of his way: he readily found the object of his pursuit, and was satisfied from the hermit's conversation, that religious

gious motives, join'd to a disgust of the world, but too well founded, were really his incentives to the seclusion he had chosen. He cultivated a little garden, and went sometimes to a neighbouring town, to purchase bread and other necessaries: the only companion of his solitude, a hare his gentleness had tamed to that degree, that it used to come regularly to share his vegetable meal, he had lately been deprived of, by a circumstance of which my friend was apprised, from the following natural, though not very poetical lines, inscribed by the poor hermit to her memory:—

“ Brown Bess is dead—no reach but bad for me,
She had no soul to lose or save, but her I lov'd to see;
Each morn she did my humble roof attend:
She was my kind companion and my constant friend.”

To the memory of a hare killed by
Squire ——s hounds.

Oh! what a pity, exclaimed Harriet:—
to be sure the gentleman who hunted that
poor

poor hare, must have been sadly shocked when he knew the circumstance : I did not hear Madam, said Mr. Ewer, yet certainly he ought to have been so ; for my part I think I should never have hunted again, after thus wantonly destroying the harmless and extraordinary friend, of so harmless and extraordinary a master. Having lamented in my turn the fate of the poor hare, I enquired if Mr. Ewer's friend knew what had disgusted the hermit with the world ? On his hesitating, Harriet repeated the question ; and not conceiving there could be any impropriety in it, I again asked if the hermit had made known his misfortunes ?—With a tremour I could in no wise account for, he at length answered, “ he was wronged, where most he loved and trusted, Madam, by a treacherous brother, and an unfaithful wife ; ”—his voice sunk as he uttered these last words, and, after a short pause of absence and silence, he arose, and bowing, without speaking a word,

word, left us both in the utmost astonishment.

“ Dear Madam, said Harriet, what can be the matter with Mr. Ewer? why should the repetition of a story he has known so long affect him thus?—It is perhaps, said I, the analogy it may bear to some misfortune of his own, perhaps——“ Dear Mrs. Withers, perhaps, what,” said she, “eagerly interrupting me, what resemblance can you possibly suppose?”—Nay, my dear, I know no more than you do; but Mr. Ewer has evidently some misfortune that preys upon his mind, and is the cause of his seeking a retreat among strangers—it may be treachery or infidelity that he has experienced—he may have been betrayed by a mistress or even by a wife—it is possible that he may be married.” Poor Harriet lost her colour and her speech at this surmise—she did not quite drop her work, but hung motionless over it, distressed beyond the possibility of concealment;

concealment ; for some minutes she neither lifted up her eyes, nor moved from her posture ; and, to avoid increasing her distress by appearing to notice it, I did not break the silence, but continued my work, now and then leaving off to observe her.

Young Mr. Peterson soon after made his appearance, looking very rosy ; he said he had been drinking with cousin Deacon, and drinking Harriet's health till he was almost tipsy—" Ah ! never look so shy upon it little cuz, said he, chucking Harriet under the chin, you'll soon tell us another story." This was too much ; I saw her eyes ready to run over, and requested her to fetch me some trifle out of my room—she took the hint, and appeared no more till supper time ; when having had time for reflection, her natural good sense had gained the ascendant, and she betrayed no appearance of emotion or dejection.

Saturday,

Saturday, Oct. 11.

When I sent Harriet into my room last night, it appears that she diverted her melancholy with burning some papers—something that looked like verse being concealed by the fender, and the ashes of the rest had in great part escaped the conflagration, I saved it altogether, and with some difficulty made out the following very tender lines. The circumstance of finding the hat-band, which you will doubtless recollect, will explain the subject:—

“Give me but what this ribbon bound ;

“Take all the rest—the sun goes round.”

WALLER.

This ribbon, which with pride I bear,
Did lately bind Orlando's hair ;
And precious band, so dear thou art,
I fain would twine thee round my heart :
A tender spell, far thence to chace,
All that his image might efface ;
That image still so lov'd, so dear,
In all my sorrows ever near
The solace of my heart, whene'er
Opprest, it sinks with anxious care:—

To

To thee, dear image, there enchas'd,
Then do my fond ideas haste;
Thy gentle soothing charm'd, I hear,
Instructive, innocent, sincere.
All that kind friendship can dictate,
My wayward fancy hears, elate;
Till brooding o'er the fairy view,
Wishing, I half believe it true.

Thee, Ribbon, how shall I dispose?
Bedeck'd with pearls in costly rows;
With beads of gold or jewels rare,
Around my neck I'd fain thee wear;
Or rather all my fears to charm,
Tie thee a bracelet on my arm;
A clasp of chrystal then shall bind,
Reflecting still its mistress' mind:
A weeping willow o'er a stream,
That still to wander on does seem,
That all unconscious of its woe,
For ever running seems to flow.
The mourning tree laments its flight,
With ceaseless sorrow day and night;
And drooping o'er its chrystal bed,
Reclines forlorn her pensive head.

Thus, my sweet Ribbon, shalt thou be
Adorn'd, and priz'd, and worn by me.

Sunday, Oct. 12.

My first and most ardent prayers to heaven are for my Edward—Oh! forget not thy Sophia; for her preserve thy life, thy health, thy virtue: for her return, dear Edward. Alas, thou canst not; but this dear child of my adoption wants a father, and for her I am weaker than I think I should be for myself alone—she is much deprest; she dreads a declaration from Deacon, which will be strongly supported by her friends, and against which she has nothing to plead but disinclination: thus much she freely owns to me; she has other fears and hopes, which she thinks she conceals:—if indeed she is conscious of their existence, it is not from me that she shall be apprised of it; I had rather stifle than give vent to the flame. Miss Grove paid a tea visit here to-day; she brought Miss Summers with her, whose purpose it was to have left her on Tuesday; she was, however, prevailed upon,

upon, nothing loath, to stay to the ball. Miss Grove enquired very particularly who was to come from M—, but could obtain no satisfaction from Miss Peterfons, who only answered that they expected some friends.—“We shall see them when they come, however, said she; except they come masked.” “They have no occasion to hide their faces, Madam,” said Miss Peterfon. “Then why do you hide their names, my dear?” said she. “Because they are names you don’t know, Madam.” “Well, ’tis to be hoped we shall know them?” “All in good time, Madam.”

There is a cricket match to be played to-morrow, in Mr. Figgins’s grounds; we are invited to an early dinner, and to see the sport. I have accepted, in order to induce Harriet to go and be amused; she says Deacon will be there, and spoil her entertainment; I have however prevailed.

Monday, Oct. 12.

I have spent the morning in assisting to dispose of Miss Anne's exotics, in our several apartments, and other momentous business preparatory to the ball. I am rather more officious than I should be, in order to excite Harriet's emulation, who struggles against the inactivity, both the effect and cause of dejection, to spare me trouble: thus her thoughts are diverted from dwelling on dangerous objects.

Miss Anne has very civilly requested that I would accept of such of her plants as are placed in my window; I have declined the offer, with thanks. I will give them hospitality this winter with pleasure, as it is to oblige her, although they are very much in my way, and very little to my taste. I do not value these things, my Edward, the more for being troublesome and expensive, and out of the reach of the commonalty.

The

The rose that blows in the cottager's garden is as fair as in his Majesty's at Kew. The woodbine that entwines his casement; the elegant jessamine that does not disdain to mingle with it; the violet peeping from beneath his hedge, are to my simple senses of all flowers the most fragrant and the most beautiful: fairly examined, I believe they will be found so; but the circumstance of their requiring no uncommon pains to cultivate, or to preserve, and being within the reach of the poorest peasant, whose hut can boast a plot of ground, render them to me doubly delightful. I perfectly coincide with Bernardin de St. Pierre, who, in his *Etudes de la Nature*, asserts, that the best and usefulest of all Nature's productions, whether animal or vegetable, will always be found to be the most common; with him, I prefer a fine apple to the vaunted anna; sweet heath mutton to venison; a good fowl to a pheasant; and but for the idea of rarities,

I believe most people would do the same. A kind Providence has placed its best gifts within the reach of at least the greatest part of its creatures, and, with a moderate share of conduct and industry, few need be without them.

We have not seen Mr. Ewer since Friday.

Tuesday, Oct. 13.

We were a large company yesterday at Mr. Figgins's; all the neighbourhood was assembled from far and near, and even Mr. Ewer was not forgotten: his countenance still wore the traces of dejection, which however cleared off a little by the time we had dined, and he was polite and agreeable as usual. I cannot relate to you what passed at our meal, which was plentiful, well served, and chearful;—for an accident that happened soon after, has put every thing else out of my head; and afflicted my
nerves

nerves with a tremor, very discernable in my writing.

We were looking at the cricket players with some interest, as the game was explained to us by Mr. Ewer, when feeling a little cold, I happened to say, "I wish I had my shawl;"—the words had scarce escaped me, when Harriet flew like an arrow in quest of it—no one had time to prevent her, hardly to perceive her absence, when her screams alarmed us all. "Sure the dog is not loose," exclaimed Miss Higgins, running to her brothers—the rest of us spectators made our best speed towards the gate of the field, except Mr. Ewer, who had leapt the hedge at the first cry, and was already out of sight. We hurried on, I the foremost—judge my sensations, Edward—when arrived near the end of the lane that led to the house, within a stone's throw of the yard, we discovered Mr. Ewer, with Harriet in his arms, pale, lifeless,

and covered with blood ; endeavouring to free himself from the attacks of a large fierce mastiff, aiming now at his charge, and now at him ; with neither hand nor foot quite at liberty—his task was equally difficult and dangerous. I was flying to his aid, but was spared an attempt so perilous for me, and so useless to him, by the arrival of one of the masters, whose well-known whistle the dog instantly obeyed, and was presently secured by him, and confined to the kennel whence he had escaped.

Mr. Ewer thus released from his troublesome assailant, bore his fair charge to the house, where plenty of assistance awaited her ; and where Mrs. Figgins, a motherly good kind of woman, led her to a bed-room, and Mr. Ewer left her to the care of the ladies. “ I believe, Madam,” said he to me, “ I was so happy as to be time enough to save your fair friend any material injury,

jury, but have pity on my anxiety, earnestly folding his arms, and let me know the worst." I flew to my dear girl, whom we undrest and put to bed, and had the satisfaction to find, that she had escaped even the slightest scratch, tho' her cloaths were torn and covered with blood : she had just opened her eyes, and was recovering, when Miss Jane Figgins bawled out,—if Miss Harriet is not hurt, I'm sure Mr. Ewer must be very much so, or where does all this blood come from—I'll go see :—I was rubbing my patient's hands, whose eyes beaming with recovered sense and thankfulness were bent on me ; when this observation, which she too plainly heard, fixt them again in insensibility. I now intreated that she might be left to my care ; and at length prevailed on the ladies to join the company below, whose sport the accident had interrupted. Miss Anne Peterson promised to bring me word how Mr. Ewer had fared for his gallantry ; she speedily

I 4 performed

performed her promise, and told me in a whisper, that his right hand was much torn, but that he had escaped further injury; that it had bled profusely, and, as he had held Harriet, of course upon her clothes; but that he made very light of it, and was in extraordinary spirits. This intelligence, which Harriet, again recovering, distinctly heard, had an instantaneous good effect. She soon after spoke in answer to my inquiries, and grew better apace. I prevailed on her, however, to lay upon the bed another hour, and Mrs. Figgins sent us tea.

When the ladies understood she was recovered, they all crowded to the apartment to see her; she was presently equipt with another muslin petticoat; and retaining no mark of her disaster, but the paleness usual after fainting; they pressed her to join the company; and as there was no prevailing

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on them to do so without her, she was necessitated to comply.

I led her into the room, where the company were engaged at cards, and Mr. Ewer, with his back to the door, was looking over one of the whist tables. Harriet trembled exceedingly, and I could hardly get her seated, before Mr. Ewer turned round and perceived us;—he immediately approached, and begged to be assured by me, that Miss Harriet had escaped all injury—his wounded hand he concealed behind him. “I wish, Sir, said I, that you were equally free,” and fairly burst into tears. Harriet was sobbing aloud. Mr. Ewer was extremely affected, and begged us to spare him. Believe me, said he, “I have seen the happiest incident of my life.”

Mr. Thomas Peterson, with his coarse jokes, luckily perhaps for us all, put an end to our sentimentals: he crept gently

behind Harriet's chair, making faces, and imitating the braying of an ass, which animal he has the faculty of aping very exactly. "Why what the d—l is all this sniveling for, said he? if you are sorry the dog did not cut up my little cuz, I'll call him in, and let him finish his meal. Come Deacon, come and kiss her; she frets, man, because it wasn't thee that saved her; she'd rather thee should'st have had that there little scratch of old towler's tooth, than Mr. Ewer; hadn't, cuz?"—Deacon said, "he was much obliged to him; he did not like fighting with mad dogs; it was best as it was." Harriet could not forbear smiling at this pretty speech, so characteristic of the speaker; and I enquired at what hour the chaise was ordered? at eleven was the answer: at which having exprest some uneasiness, Mr. Figgins obligingly offered his, and a servant to conduct us home; this was readily accepted,

ed, and we set off as soon as it could be got ready.

We left the company at cards, and heard no more of the rest of our family till a late or rather an early hour. When we country folks meet, we are very unwilling to part. Company our family must have, we care not what, which, nor who, but without company we cannot exist. Harriet is in better health to-day than spirits—I dragged her out a walking this morning, and thus escaped seeing Mr. Ewer, who came with enquiries after her health. “Oh! Mrs. Willars,” said she, and stopt short—when her cousins informed her of the visit. I believe she is a little inclined to be out of humour with me for taking her out. I enquired of the ladies how Mr. Ewer’s hand was? but they had forgot to ask: they supposed it was no great matter, as he did not complain.

Wednesday, Oct. 14.

To-morrow's festival engages us all—Mrs. Peterfon scolds, and frets and bustles, the young ladies fly from the kitchen to the toilet, and from the toilet to the kitchen; now the supper is setting out, now the head-dress. Their brother says, he expects to see a cap for a side-dish, and a jelley for a top-knot: even Harriet brightens up, and consults her glafs and me, about what she shall wear. I doubt the latent hope of seeing her deliverer has more to do with her cheerfulness than the ball at this *entre nous*. She now avoids speaking of Mr. Ewer, never trusting herself to utter his name, and never hearing it without blushing. These are symptoms I am acquainted with, Edward. I can judge of the disorder, but know not how to remedy, nor even to blame it. So many untoward circumstances are continually throwing this man in our way, always in some amiable or interesting

interesting light : it seems as if there was a conspiracy against my innocent Harriet's peace. I believe the deep concern I take in it will one of these days inspire me with courage enough to ask Mr. Ewer a few questions ; if he does not answer me with sincerity and candour, I give up my judgment forever.

Thursday, Oct. 15.

Mrs. Peterson hopes I will excuse a poor dinner ; her husband and son are gone out, and every body is so busy. I beg her to give herself no trouble upon my account ; for although I am no longer of age to give up my dinner for a dance, I have not forgotten that such things were. The dinner did really require some apology, but as nobody ate but me, I have dined as well as if there had been the best fare, and no thoughts at all of a dance—so much for the

the *sans-froid* of thirty-one. I am going to help at the toilet of my adopted daughter; who in return will assist at mine.— Adieu, dear Edward, how absent shall I be this evening! How will my wandering spirit seek its home! I shall sing, if called upon, *pensez à moi!* Do you recollect the French song you gave me with a fan? be sure to bear in mind this verse:

If when by chance the married rover,

Stray heedless in unguarded hour;

Oh, may he on his way discover,

This moral flow'r;

Of faith and truth so fondly plighted,

A strong memorial may it be;

While Hymen whispers ere they're slighted,

Ah! think on me.

Lorsque par fois l'Epoux volage,

Hors de chez lui cherche le bonheur,

Ah! puisse l'il sur son passage,

Voir cette fleur, voir cette fleur,

De la vertu la douce empire;

Lui rappelant serment et foi,

L'Hymen tout bas lui faudra dire;

Pensez à moi, pensez à moi.

Friday,

Friday, Oct. 16.

Shall I introduce you, my dearest Edward, as spectator at a rural ball? first let me announce the company. The comely fresh-coloured woman, who bids you welcome at your entrance, is Mrs. Peterson. The young lady who presides at the tea-table, is her eldest daughter. Miss Anne is pouring out the coffee. I believe I have already sufficiently described them to you; lest, however, you should mistake them, the eldest is she who has distinguished her dark brown looks with a yellow turban and a white feather;—the youngest has powdered her lighter hair, and wears a pink turban, ornamented with black, and a black feather. The tall young man, with features rather prominent, his hair tied and powdered, who is so officious about the tea-table, is the younger Mr. Grove. The drilling Captain leans over Miss Peterson's chair, disguised in dark blue—the
little

little dapper-man just by is another Captain, alias Ensign Stark. Miss Grove sits at the upper end of the room, neatly attired with a dark silk gown, and smart black bonnet: the shewy lass beside her is Miss Sommers: the pale lady opposite is Mrs. Packitt of M—; and the two young persons near her, so extremely alike, are her twin sisters: those two young men, who are so florid, (one tall, one middle sized,) talking together in the corner, are the Mr. Bertrams: there is a third near them with lank lean locks, and a fallow countenance; it is the elder Grove. The Figginses are the group just entering: the very plump one is Miss Jane; she wears the very identical white hat, of which I believe I have already made honourable mention—the eldest sister you will think handsome; she has very regular features, a clear brown skin, and a very pleasing countenance: the youngest is that good-humoured lass who has already begun dancing by herself: the

the two young men who escort them are their brothers. There are Mr. and Mrs. Bennett, a couple that can hardly be called a pair: the husband is that tall, thin, mean-looking man who stands by the fire; his wife, the smart, snug, fussy lady in blue. Need I name the young person who sits a little behind your Sophia; her auburn locks curl thro' the plaits of a kerchief, wrought with a wreath of pansies, and she is further distinguished by a bunch of white roses; her dress is plain muslin; observe the flush of modesty on her cheek, and the timid intelligence of her eye: "'tis my charming Harriet."

"Innocence in her heart abides,
"Her eyes all candour speak;
"Decency o'er her garb presides,
"And blushes paint her cheek."

"Dans son coeur est l'innocence,
"Dans ses yeux est la candeur;
"Sa parure est la decence,
"Et son fard est la pudeur."

The tall, pensive figure, with one hand in a sling, the other on my chair, you will quickly recognise to be Mr. Ewer; and the little round man, whose unmeaning eye is fixed on Harriet, you will guess is Deacon. Mr. Peterson is that thin fly-looking person, in mixed drab-coloured clothes; and that tall youth, with his hands in his pocket, looking at once so knowing and so awkward, is Mr. Thomas, his son and heir. There are two more families, and several individuals; but I have named all whom it is essential for you to know. The music strikes up, and we are all in motion. — “Well, sister, how be us to do?” said Mr. Thomas — “I’m for choosin’ partners, for my part, and changing every two dances.” Miss Peterson said, “she was engaged for the evening, the company might do as they pleased.” As this determination occasioned some confusion, it was at length agreed, that the gentlemen should draw the ladies’ fans. Captain Sifton

Sifton secured Miss Peterson's. Harriet fell to the lot of one of the Bertrams; and the dance began. After looking on a little, cards were proposed for the spectators, and Mrs. Bennett, Mr. Ewer, Mr. Peterson and I engaged at whist. I played with Mr. Ewer, who was extremely absent, and we soon lost two rubbers; he then declined playing any more, making many apologies for his want of attention; which, he said, he had in vain endeavoured to subdue; but he could not justify any further abuse of my patience, or neglect of my interest, though he was perfectly indifferent about his own.

Our party thus deranged, we went to take a view of the dancers, who had changed partners, all except the two Miss Petersons, who still retained their captains; and did so all the evening, in spite of the murmurs of their pastoral beaux, complaining

plaining aloud of the preference given to strangers. They obviated a direct breach of the rules by changing from one sister to the other; but never engaged, or, indeed, noticed any one else. This behaviour excited universal discontent; and, in some measure, interrupted the general good humour. The other ladies, who, perhaps, would have been glad to have flirted a little with the gay strangers, and would have monopolized them, if they could, as well as the Miss Petersons, were extremely mortified at not having the opportunity. Mr. Peterson shewed his displeasure, by a neglect little short of rudeness to his military guests, who, on their parts, did not condescend to notice either him or his behaviour; but made extremely free both with his wine and his daughters. Mr. Bertram the elder, whose pretensions to Miss Peterson are no secret, was very near quarrelling with
Captain

Captain Sifton; however, one cooled as the other grew warm, and the mirth of the evening escaped material interruption.

Harriet, who had danced with Deacon, and afterwards with the younger Grove, was again challenged by the same: she said she was fatigued, and wished to sit down, and accordingly fled for refuge to the parlour and me; her swain however followed, saying, that he should be glad to sit down a bit too. Another card party was arranged; Mr. Ewer was left out, but I was constrained to make one; the others were Mrs. Packitt, Mr. Grove sen. and Mr. Peterfon. Harriet seated herself by me, her swain took post behind my chair, and Mr. Ewer was looking or rather leaning over Mrs. Packitt, (for he seemed lost in thought and totally inattentive to what was passing,) who sat on my left by Harriet:—his wounded hand exactly met her eye, who saw no other object, but gazed on it till they

they filled with tears. The uneasiness he so evidently betrayed, at length gave her courage to ask him in a half whisper, if his hand was not very painful? "I am distressed beyond imagination, said she, to know myself the cause of your suffering." Mr. Ewer's countenance instantly brightened; "no, indeed, Miss Harriet, said he, my hand gives me no pain at all; do you think I have so little gallantry, I that value myself upon being a true knight, as to be afflicted at the wounds I receive in a fair lady's cause, or to consider them otherwise than as badges of honour. I don't know but I may wear a black patch all my life; and as for this sling, it is a mere matter of parade I assure you, intended to excite interest and compassion:—you are a proof how well it has succeeded." "And is it to be pitied that you look so gloomy?" said Deacon. "Oh, Mr. Ewer may have good reasons for that," said Grove, "perhaps his wife has found him out, and is coming

coming to seek him." Mr. Ewer, who had relapsed into silence and melancholy, made no answer to these two speeches;— he remained, however, but an instant longer at the card table. He then paced the room in an agitated manner, and seated himself in a chair at the further end of it. "Is he married, then?" said Deacon in a low voice, "mark that Miss Harriet! (for his love has inspired him with a little penetration) I'm sure 'tis the best news I've heard this many a day; he must be a good for nothing fellow to leave his wife, but who told you so Grove? though I dare say 'tis true, let who's will have told you." Grove replied, "that the day before he had met with Mr. Ewer, at Doctor W.'s at M—; whether he had been to have his hand drest; that a friend of his in the mealing way, at Bristol, came into the shop as Mr. Ewer was going out, and bowed to him with an air of distant acquaintance, which was returned in the same manner."

Grove

Grove eagerly inquired if his friend knew that person, and where he had seen him? "I don't know him much," said the other, "though I have seen him too often to mistake him, not that I should have noticed him but for his wife, who, I suppose, is the handsomest woman in England: they often walked together by my door; and, I believe, lived in the neighbourhood. I have lately seen the lady alone, and think I have heard something was the matter between them; but I am a man of business, and don't trouble myself with other people's concerns." Grove put many other questions to his friend, but could obtain no further intelligence; he had told all he knew, which he affirmed to be strictly true, although he did not even know the person's name of whose identity he pretended to be so certain. Mr. Ewer, who was now again pacing the room, drew within hearing of our table, and of course the conversation dropt. All this time I was afraid to look at Harriet; she, however,

bore the shock with great fortitude, and betrayed no extraordinary emotion. "You will dance the next two dances, my love," said I; she prest my hand, and bowed her silent assent. At this instant the dancers came thronging into the parlour in quest of refreshment; among the first was Capt. Sifton, who, approaching Mr. Ewer with an affectation of interest, said, "I presume, Sir, you received that wound in the wars?" "It was as honourably acquired, Sir," said Mr. Ewer, "and I am as proud of it as if it were." "What, in a duel perhaps, Sir; ah! a wound in the sword arm." Mr. Ewer, saying coldly that he was no duellist, walked away. In the bustle he took an opportunity of requesting me to favour him with half an hour's audience, whenever I had leisure, and shortly after withdrew without being noticed.

Harriet supported her spirits with wonderful resolution; she danced as much and

as long as any of the company ; and perfectly concealed her uneasiness from all but me. We did admirably well till after supper, when in her turn she was solicited to sing; this was too much for her spirits : she pleaded fatigue—the hoarseness usual after dancing—inability—nothing would do ; her uncle ordered her peremptorily to comply. She could not recollect a song ; her cousin Anne innocently reminded her of “ Hope told a flattering tale,” which is one of her best. She began, and consonant to her feelings, acquitted herself in the first part inimitably well, but her voice failed totally in the second, and, notwithstanding the unbounded applause her execution had extorted, she found it impossible to proceed. She was chided for disappointing the company, in harsh terms, both by her uncle and aunt ; and having thus a pretence for her tears, they flowed without controul. She withdrew to her apartment, whither I followed her, pretending, like the
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the rest, to mistake the cause of her distress. The dear girl now gave free vent to the sorrows of her oppressed heart, and wept upon my bosom. I remained with her as long as the company stayed, now soothing, now weeping with her.

“Oh, my dear Mrs. Willars!” said she, “how good you are, and how weak am I! How happy ought I to think myself in having such a tender friend! no, indeed, my tears are not all bitter, your kindness is the cause of half of them; and I shall be so much better to-morrow for this relief.”

I made her promise to breakfast with me in my apartment, the next day; and left her to her repose, as soon as I heard the family in motion previous to taking theirs.

Saturday, Oct. 17.

Harriet was in my apartment by nine o'clock this morning, and we breakfasted comfortably together. Our little meal passed almost in silence, for she seemed much abashed, and altogether inattentive to my attempts at amusing her, by observations on the company and entertainment of the preceding evening; at length she assumed courage enough to say, "I am quite ashamed of myself," my dear Mrs. Willars;" "but do not quite despise me, and I hope to betray no more such foolishness." "You have nothing to be ashamed of, my dear," said I, "and certainly nothing to apprehend from any harsh construction of mine: I can see nothing in you to blame; and have not the least inclination to make any such discovery." "Ah! you do not know," said she. "She hesitated; and unwilling to distress her, I turned the conversation. I talked

I talked of you, my Edward. Whether it is regard for me, or that, upon such a subject, I contrive to be interesting, it is certain she always appears to listen to it with pleasure. When this topic was a little exhausted, I ventured to speak of Mr. Ewer; I said, I felt for his distresses, and hoped to hear his complete justification from himself, as he had requested a conference with me. Harriet, blushing, replied, "That she should be eager to hear it too; for is it not a strange circumstance," continued she, "that he should leave his wife, and hide himself here at such a distance from her, and from all his connections? the more I think of it, the more I find it unaccountable."

The ice broken, we now conversed familiarly on this tender subject; and, in a manner that convinced me, that when her innocent and virtuous heart is once accustomed to his idea, as the property of
K 3 another,

another, it will speedily recover its tranquillity. She seems already much relieved. Two hours had past imperceptibly, when the banging of the outward gate drew Harriet to the window to see whom it announced. The subject of our discourse was turning towards the house. I proposed to go and receive him, presuming that the family were engaged, and that we should find the parlour at liberty, which accordingly we did: but I had some difficulty to prevail on Harriet to accompany me.

Mr. Ewer paid his compliments with his usual ease and good breeding. We were hardly seated, when, as if determined to come to an explanation, and fearful of interruption or delay, he abruptly began: "I have past a restless night, ladies; the fear of suffering, in your opinions, from what passed yesterday, allowed me no repose. Will it be presuming upon the
indulgence

indulgence which has lately been all my comfort, to attempt a justification?" He paused; but neither of us answering, he went on precipitately:—"You see before you a most unfortunate man: too truly a married one; driven from my wife, my home, my happiness, by the cruellest of all circumstances. I came determined to have explained it to you at length; but forgive me, it is too cruel. It is impossible, believe me, dear Mrs. Willars, I am an unhappy and most injured man. I sought, in this retreat, to hide myself and my misfortunes, from an unpitying world: but it is in vain, they pursue me every where.

Dearest Madam, do not therefore deprive me of your friendship and good opinion; you know not the balm they have been to a wounded heart."

It was not possible, my dear Edward, to hear him and withhold one's confidence or one's tears. Harriet wept outright.— As soon as I could speak, I assured him of our reliance on his worth, and sympathy in his sorrows; and besought him to consider us always as tender friends, to whom he might speak of his misfortunes as little or as much as tended to relieve his sense of them.

Mrs. Peterson interrupted us here.— “How do you do, Madam? how do you do, Miss Harriet, after your perils? “Have you told Mr. Ewer how you fell a crying, in the midst of your song, before all the company last night? Her very best song, sir, that she used to sing so well—

“Hope told a flattering tale.”

Judge, Edward, of my feelings, and of poor Harriet's confusion during this harangue.”

range.” Mr. Ewer really, or affectedly inattentive—for he played his part so well, it was impossible to tell which was the first to relieve us by inquiries after the health of the absent part of the family.—“The girls are tired enough,” said Mrs. Peterson; “they kept it up till four o’clock this morning: they are willing to make up for lost time, however; for I’ve seen neither of them yet.” She had hardly uttered these words, when the young ladies entered the room. Mr. Ewer “addressed them with the usual compliments; he said, he waited upon the family with inquiries after their health; to which he should have added apologies for his abrupt departure, if he could conceive so insignificant a circumstance worthy of the least attention.” “Why, as you did not dance,” said Miss Peterson, “it did not much signify, to be sure, or else I should have been very angry with you; but you *married* men are always *so* lazy.” “Lack-a-daisy

—ah,” said Mrs. Peterfon, “they fays as how you be married; well, I never should have thought it: But what makes you live here all alone, so unkind like, as if you belonged to nobody; when, all the while, you have got a wife?” Mr. Ewer slightly bowed his head, but made no answer.—“Mr. Ewer may have good reasons, Mama,” said Miss Anne. “Reasons, what reasons, child?” replied her mother, “I know of no reasons why married people should not live together; here is poor Mrs. Willars always moping about;—I dare say she is of my mind. Don’t you wish now, Ma’am, (addressing me,) that you had not married a sailor?”—“Why, Mama,” said Miss Peterfon, “you see other men can leave their wives as well as sailors.”—Mr. Ewer’s politeness here stepped into his relief. “No man,” said he, “who was not indispensably obliged, would ever have left Mrs. Willars, if— he stopped short: the Ladies, whose curiosity

was now all on fire, exclaimed, all at once, "If what, Mr. Ewer?" "I beg your pardon," said he, "I forgot what I was going to observe.—I wish you a very good morning:" and he vanished.

He was the subject of conversation till dinner: much conjecture was hazarded upon his extraordinary situation: and when the gentlemen joined us, they contributed their remarks. Mr. Peterfon was of opinion, that he had absconded for debt; and supposed that his wife might concur at his absence and concealment, rather than to see him languish in a prison. He appealed to me, if I was not of his opinion. I denied, as with truth I could, all knowledge of his affairs; but added, that I did not think his embarrassments were of a pecuniary nature. "He is a great favourite of Mrs. Willars's," said Mr. Thomas, "thof one would think this story of his being married, which it seems he

don't pretend to deny, might lower him a bit in her opinion."—"It has not in the least, Mr. Thomas," said I; "on the contrary, as it convinces me he is unhappy in his separation, whether by force or choice, from the person who should have shared or softened his sorrows, his case is somewhat similar to my own, and therefore interests me the more" "And what says Cousin Harriet," rejoined he; "does she think the better of him for being married too: does he *in-te-rest*, (drawling out the word,) *her-too*, the more upon that account?" "Harriet," blushing, I answered for her, "that I was sure she had too much sense, as well as humanity, to value a person of merit the less for being singularly unhappy." "Well," said he, "Deacon is coming this evening, and she may settle that there point with him; he is a person of merit, and singularly unhappy in her frowns; for I'll be sworn, that either of my sisters, or any other girl
in

in the parish, would jump at him." "Pray, Tom, answer for yourself," said his eldest sister, bridling: "what, because he's as great a clown as yourself, you think nobody can resist him." Clown or not, as you please, Miss," answered he; "for my part, I think him vastly before your fine captains, and myself too, I assure you; and if either of them offers to come in here again at the door, I'll shew them out of the window." "Miss Peterson said, she should not ask his leave, whether she was to keep company with nothing but Hottentots. She would let him see she had as much influence with her papa as he:" and she burst into tears.

"Charlotte," said her father, "you know, I hate red coats; and I hope I shall never see another under my roof." "Yes, Miss Charlotte," said her brother, "we don't love lobsters here; we are too far from the sea coast, d'ye see—they stinks: we'll

we'll turn 'em into crabs, make 'em crawl out backwards—so, Miss Charlotte, so:—he then went out of the room backwards, laughing very loud, and affecting to imitate the motion he described.

Miss Peterfon was now sobbing aloud; and her mother, whose entire favourite she is, began scolding her husband for the part he had in her distress. “You never had any genteel notions, Mr. Peterfon; and because your son is as great a bear as yourself, you are always upholding him. Don't cry, my dear,” continued she, “your papa has no objection to your keeping genteel company, I am sure.”—“Mr. Peterfon, who is likewise fond of his daughter, was moved with her tears rather than with his wife's eloquence; he bade her be a good girl, and be civil to Mr. Bertram, and all would be well.”

I left

I left them at this juncture, and was soon followed by Harriet, who sat with me till we were summoned to tea. We discoursed familiarly of Mr. Ewer; both agreeing, that some great misconduct of his wife's must have driven him from her. Harriet wondered, as, indeed, did I, how any woman could be wanting in duty and affection to him. I was pleased to find that she could speak of him with ease, and without emotion; and have no doubt, but her innocent heart will speedily reject all that is too tender in her regard for him, now that she is convinced from himself of his sacred and irrevocable engagement; the rest, thus purified, may be permitted to remain; and our conversation and interview, with this amiable unfortunate man, will henceforth have less restraint, and more of confidence and friendship.

In the evening, Mr. Deacon did not fail his appointment.—“ Well, Miss Harriet,”

riet," said he, "how do you do after your dance? I assure you I feel a little stiff myself; (then, in a half whisper,) but if it had been ten times worse, I could not have helped coming to see you, after your uncle and aunt's snubbing you so before all the company, as if you could help being a little vaporish, as all young women are; now a good husband would cure the vapors at once, and take you away from being always snubbed like a child." The latter part of this discourse was quite whispered; for his good friend, Mr. Thomas, had taken care to place him as near as possible to his cousin. This eloquence did not, however, succeed in obtaining a word of answer from the fair object to whom it was addressed; who, turning to me, endeavoured to force a conversation on the entertainment of the preceding evening: this, according with the ideas of all present, soon became general. "Pray, sister," said Mr. Thomas, "what do you call

call that there step of your Captain's?—any thing but dancing, I hope.” “I call *that there* step, the Scot's step, Sir,” said she, “smiling at his ignorance.” “A Scotch step do you,” said he; “What, a Highland reel, I suppose? I thought it had been something outlandish. And t'other red-coat's was a Russian step, I suppose? It was comparedly like a bear.” “You might have applied the comparisons to people it suited better, brother,” answered she; “but we can't see ourselves.” “A bull, if you please, sister, a true John Bull; but no outlandish animal, no bear, no pig-tailed monkey, sister.”

Here the dialogue suffered some interruption, by the entrance of the two Mr. Groves; in the elder of whom, Mr. Thomas found a warm support; and, in the younger, a steady one. The military heroes were not spared; and their fair champions were driven, one after the other, from
every

every line of defence. When nothing more was left to say of their persons and manners, but every word and look had been severely scrutinized, poor Mr. Ewer came in for his share; and Mr. Grove senior thought he had summoned up all abuse in one word, when he pronounced him to be a disbanded officer: "There's something in his carriage that smells of the military," said he, "I should have known it any where: but did you observe, Deacon, how the fellow was cut up when I talked of his wife? Ah, he's got half a dozen, I'll be bound." "Says Mr. Thomas, mayhap he thought to have pickt up another with money here, if he had not been found out. I knows of one that would have been willing enough. I believe."—"I don't believe," said Deacon, "that any young woman could ever have liked such a long, thin, dry, dismal-looking skeleton." "He's quite an *oblong*, to be sure," said Mrs. Peterfon; "but, poor man,

man, I suppose 'tis trouble." "He is certainly," said Harriet with some spirit, "the very reverse of Mr. Deacon, in every thing; and we cannot wonder at his finding him so disgusting." "You don't think him so, Harriet," said Mr. Thomas, "that's clear." "No, really," said she, now no longer afraid to speak her opinion, "I think him a sufficiently personable, and a very agreeable man."—"There's no accounting for women's fancies," said the elder Grove; "they always like every thing they should dislike; and hate every thing they ought to like."

The two sisters, to avenge the treatment of their military favourites, now joined, with all their might, in defence of Mr. Ewer. "He is not handsome, I allow," said the eldest, "but next to Captain Sifton, he is the most elegant man I ever saw." Miss Anne was warm in the praise of his attention to the Ladies, his delicacy,
and

and the happy medium in his carriage, so rarely attained, between boldness and awkward timidity. "Mrs. Peterfon, herself, spoke, with pleasure, of his attentions to her, on several occasions, when she wanted a little assistance; and might have looked for it from nearer friends, and older acquaintance, in vain. I might have sunk into the earth for you, Mr. Deacon, that Sunday in the wood," said she; "but the instant he came up, he offered me his arm." "Deacon said, he never thought of offering his arm to an old woman, when there were young ones in company:" and the other gentlemen added, "nor when there was not either." You will believe, Edward, that attacks such as these can do our poor friend no injury; however, as they prove a wish that way inclined, they are so far unpleasant to his well-wishers.

Adieu, my love! I have scribbled till I am quite tired.

Sunday,

Sunday, 18.

The whole forenoon of yesterday was spent in anxious expectation by the fair sisters, who had bestowed some extraordinary pains on their toilet, in the hopes of a visit from their partners. Every sound of a horse's foot, every opening of the door heightened Miss Peterson's fine bloom, and threw her sister into momentary tremour. One held a book in her hand, while her eyes were fixt on the window: the other as ineffectually pretending to work, threw it down every moment on the slightest pretence, running from the door to the window, from the window to the outer door, to catch a peep at the road. "Sister Anne, sister Anne, do you see nobody coming?" but neither dragoon nor musketeer appeared, which certainly was very ill-bred and provoking, for a better opportunity could not have offered of receiving them well; the gentlemen who
have

have such objections to them, being both some miles from home. Miss Peterson always secure of her mother, obtained that the dinner should be delayed, lest we should have been surpris'd at table at such an ungenteel hour, as it is usual with us to dine. For this circumstance an excuse of business was formed, and addrest to me, with which of course I was perfectly satisfied. At length we prevailed on ourselves, all further pretences for delay failing, to assemble at dinner; but every thing was wrong and every body out of humour; we literally quarrelled with our bread and butter.

This afternoon, Sunday, was spent by the family at Mr. Grove's. I declined being of the party, and Harriet, at her earnest request, was permitted to stay at home with me. One of the maids, whose name is Sally, and who gives me the little attendance I require, with an attention and good humour that has won upon my good opinion, came

came to us all in tears, with a tale of the distresses of her family; which are briefly as follow:—Her mother, a widow, lives in a little hut, on one side the common I have so often mentioned to you; she has a family of two daughters and a son; the eldest of the girls was well placed at service, but has lately returned home with an infant, the consequence of her misconduct, and the small pox: but what afflicts poor Sally the most, is the danger of her aged grandmother, who being likewise of the family, has caught the infection, and is extremely ill; the youngest girl is likewise sickening, and is little likely to be able long to help the others, as she will shortly want assistance herself: to add to their distress, none of the neighbours will go near them, but shun the house as if it were infected with the plague. The poor girl, who had been home for a holiday, returned almost broken hearted at the sight of all this distress, and
described

described it to us with so much nature and simplicity, that we were almost as much affected as herself. In the midst of our consultations of what was to be done for their immediate relief, arrived, very opportunely, Mr. Ewer, who was speedily made acquainted with the subject in debate, and as speedily interested in it. A subscription to pay a nurse was instantly agreed upon, but where to find her was a point not so easily settled; for whoever enters the house will be debarred all communication with any other; a hard condition to people whose only source is a little gossiping. Sally could think of no person likely to undertake the office; she, however, recollected that it was probable Mrs. Clarke, Mr. Ewer's landlady, might; for besides that her husband was overseer, she herself had a very extensive acquaintance in the parish. This hint was sufficient for Mr. Ewer, who instantly left us to go in quest
of

of her at home ; he was to return of course, and we waited tea for him. The rest to-morrow. Good night, my Edward.

Monday 19.

I should have told you, my dear Edward, that our poor Sally has never had the small pox ; there are others of the family in the same case—thus she is precluded from giving the help her good heart would cheerfully bestow ; and she has the additional distress of a little fear upon her own account, tho' I am convinced that is the least of her trouble, for she is as far from being selfish as interested.

We waited the return of our envoy almost as impatiently as the Miss P—s the arrival of their beaux, but without being disappointed as they were. He returned at

length triumphantly :—Mrs. Clarke knew of a poor widow in the neighbourhood very proper for our purpose; she was immediately sent for, and Mr. Ewer did not return till he saw her on her way to Sally's mother, the distance not being very great from Farmer Clarke's : to day he is to send an apothecary, and he has undertaken himself the office of our almoner, as we must not approach the infected spot, for fear of spreading the contagion.

This business of benevolence so satisfactorily settled, we were all in harmony of spirits. Mr. Ewer, convinced by the confidence reposed in him, that he had not suffered in our good opinion, seemed all at once restored to happiness, and spoke of his affairs with less reserve,—“ I am very anxious,” said he, “ ladies, of convincing you, that I had no intention of appearing under a feigned character. I never thought my being married or not, a matter of consequence

sequence enough to deserve an explanation. As I am situated, whom could it concern? I am far from regretting the chance which has made it known to you, ladies, though had it been still a secret to all the village besides, I should have escaped, as you well know,—troublesome questions, that I cannot answer, and observations that pain me in spite of all my contempt for the observers.” From one interesting subject to another, we talked of you, my Edward: I was insensibly led to prattle, and listened to with partial attention, I’m sure we spent a most delightful evening.

Tuesday 20:

Mr. Ewer was so kind as to call this morning on purpose to bring Sally news of her friends; the child, which might be spared, is in a fair way, but the poor old

woman very unlikely to recover; the others are doing well; the apothecary recommended wine, which Mr. Ewer has taken care to supply. Poor Sally, who tenderly loves her grandmother, is inconsolable that she cannot see her; but in the midst of her distress, shews the goodness of her heart by the warmth of her acknowledgment to all who have contributed to her relief. Mrs. Peterson has sent some good broth, prepared with her own hands: thus I flatter myself the poor sufferers will want no article of necessary relief. The fear of the disorder spreading causes much anxiety here. Mrs. Peterson herself has never had it, no more than the greater part of the servants. Mr. Ewer must refrain from visiting here, as long as he calls at the infected cottage; an attention it will be needless to recommend to him, now that he is apprised of Mrs. Peterson's alarms.

Wednesday

Wednesday 21.

Our morning's walk has proved very unfortunate; it has been fatal to poor Sailor, our constant and faithful attendant. Our evil star led us to seek the village church-yard, across some grounds, which are really pleasant; but I never shall like them again. The poor animal tript gaily before us, as he was wont, barking with joy at the birds, and every thing he saw—now almost out of sight in the stubble, now frisking towards us, to ask which way we meant to turn. As we were returning, some unlucky boys, entering the church-yard, as we went out of it, attracted his notice; he stood with his fore-paw upon the stile and barked at them; they all threw stones at him; one more expert or more mischievous than the rest, aimed a jagged flint so well, and with such force, that the poor animal could but give one cry, and run towards us, before he dropt and expired! I cannot express

to you, my dear Edward, our astonishment and grief at this unlucky accident:—we both stood stupified and motionless, as if we too had felt the blow; it was so instantaneous, so unexpected!—I could almost have killed the faithful creature's unprovok'd assailant: he was, however, already out of sight, and our poor breathless favourite excited all our care: we lifted him from the ground as gently as possible, still flattering ourselves that, with proper remedies, he might be restored; we lugged him between us a long mile, that we were still from home: at a little distance from the house we descried Mr. Thomas, whom I never before was so glad to see, for he loves dogs, and poor Sailor was rather a favourite: we called to him with all our might; at length we made him hear, and he came trudging to us leisurely enough, across the plough'd ground. "What, d'ye wants me," said the swain? "what have ye got cuddled up there? a child? a hare? What the

the devil, poor Sailor!—Ah! poor beast, is dead enough; as dead as a door nail!--What kill'd him?" When the accident was explained to him, he bestowed some hearty curses on the *young bang dog* that had done it, and swore if he could find him out he would whip him all over the parish, and duck him into the bargain. We were by this time arrived, and all the family assembled; fatigued and heartily grieved, I threw myself into a chair, and burst into a passion of tears.—“It was my husband’s dog, pray excuse me—his faithful friend and follower: and almost the last words he said to me, were, pray Sophia, take care of poor Sailor. I used to talk to him of his master, and the poor animal would look as if he understood me. Pray try to bleed him, he may not be quite dead!” Mr. Thomas shook his head; however, to satisfy me, cut off part of his tail; a few drops of blood followed, and I fancied he might recover; we poured a lit-

the water down his throat, but all was ineffectual : life's last spark was extinguished, and his honest, faithful, grateful heart, cold for ever !

I hope it is not a fault to be so attached to a poor animal, and so grieved for his loss ; but indeed, my Edward, I cannot help it. I know you loved the affectionate creature, and am sure that he loved you, next to your Sophia, who would so joyfully have greeted your return. He always knew your step at a distance, and was ready to tear down the door that parted him from you. Oh ! my poor Sailor ! I would have excused myself from appearing at dinner, where I made a poor figure, and could hardly swallow a mouthful. Mr. Peterson rallied me, and said, "if I had had children I should not be so fond of dumb things ;" he said "he would get me another ; I might choose out of his kennel." They think I behave like a child, Edward, and like a child they treat me ; not conceiving how
very

very dear to me is all that has relation to thee.

Mr. Thomas, who could not account for the blow having proved so fatal, has opened the dog, and discovered, that the stone struck him directly on the heart, as he stood upon his hind legs. "It was very extraordinary," he said, and his mother observed, "that his time was come." I have prevailed on the gardener to dig a neat grave just under my window; there shall he be carefully deposited.

"There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,

"There, the first roses of the year shall blow."

I shall have a little neat stone erected, and prevail upon Harriet and Mr. Ewer to assist me with an inscription; though I despair of our succeeding so well as the author of the following lines, which I met with somewhere in Oxfordshire, to the memory of such another favourite:—

"Thy poor remains from vile neglect to save,

"Thus, faithful Trag, thy master mark'd thy grave."

I think it hardly possible, upon such an occasion, to hit upon two happier lines.

Thursday 22.

Mr. Ewer regularly sends news of the cottagers, who are all doing very well, except the poor old woman, of whom little hope is entertained. Sally came fobbing into my room this morning, with news so afflicting to her as the desperate state of her aged and affectionate parent:—"Ah! madam," said she, "my poor grandmother that used to nurse and spoil me so, when I was a child; that used to deny herself bread to buy me cakes; and break her back, poor dear soul, to set me on foot,—I shall never see her again; I cannot even go to help her." She shook her head to see me

in tears, too, as if she meant to reproach me with the cause of them, as if she would have said, you are crying for a dog, while others lament their dearest relations; 'tis a sign you are a stranger to misfortune. "My poor Sally," said I, answering her silent reproach, "I am heartily concerned for your distress; a kind parent's danger is a bitter grief indeed! But if this same kind parent had given you in charge, at parting or death, an animal that used to be her favourite and companion, would you not be very fond of it, and very much grieved that it should come to an untimely end?—If I am so concerned for the loss of an animal, Sally, it does not prevent my feeling for you; nor allowing your distress to be infinitely better founded than mine." Sally allowed that Madam was very tender hearted, and went about her usual avocations.

The weather was not at all engaging; but Harriet, from a kind motive, insisted
L 6 upon

upon my walking. Miss Peterfon offered to be of the party; and we fet out. I turned difgusted from the hateful walk of yefterday: the oppofite way leads to my common, and thither we directed our fteps. Oh, how I miff poor Sailor! I was continually looking round after him; and once actually called him. Ah, my dear Harriet! it was ill-judged to take me out to-day.

Miss Peterfon propofed calling at Mrs. Clarke's. Harriet made fome objections; but not being fupported by me, who was ftupid and filent, Miss P. judged me confenting, and led on. Arrived there, I recovered enough from my abfence to obferve that Harriet looked diftrefled: I faid it was too late; we fhould difturb the family at dinner; I had rather not go in.—Mrs. Clarke had, however, feen us, and came out to meet us. “Pray walk in, ladies,” faid fhe, “I expect Mr. Ewer in every

every minute;" as if she was well convinced the visit was to him.

Miss Peterson said, we could not stop a moment; but being very near in our walk, we just called to know how she did. Mrs. Clarke led to Mr. Ewer's parlour, where some books and papers were scattered about, and the cloth laid for dinner. She offered refreshments, which we refused; and Harriet seemed so uneasy, that we were hardly seated, before I rose again to go away, alleging that we were retarding Mrs. Clarke's dinner. "Oh, we shan't dine till Mr. Ewer returns," said Mrs. Clarke; "pray rest yourselves—don't hurry: he will be sadly vext if he don't see you."

Harriet now rose the first, and no intreaties could prevail on her to be again seated. She was all impatience to be gone; but her cousin was not at all so; and contrived so many delays, that we met Mr. Ewer

Ewer just as we were at the door: "Nay, Miss Harriet," said he, for she was hurrying by him, "you do not run away so; you must return, for five minutes, to reward me for the banishment to which I am constrained. Come, dear Miss Peterson, I am sure you are too good-natured to tantalize a poor exile with such a transient apparition of beauty. Mrs. Willars, pray prevail upon the young ladies to return for a few minutes." He took a hand of each of them, and led again to the parlour. "You look very grave, Mrs. Willars," said he; "but indeed I have no contagion about me; I have found a trusty messenger to do duty for me at the cottage, and only wait Mrs. Peterson's permission to pay my respects as usual." "Mrs. Willars has reason for looking so grave," said Miss Peterson; "we brought her out in order to divert her a little: she has lost her favourite Sailor." Mr. Ewer was eager to know the particulars, and sympathised, unaffectedly,

unaffectedly, in my distress; for he too loves animals: and poor Sailor used to fawn upon him, and bid him welcome.—He promised to assist us with our epitaph.

He would fain have conducted us home; we were obliged to be very peremptory in our refusal of his services; and he would not, however, be prevented seeing us a little way. How polite he is, said Miss Peterson! what a pity he is not rich!

Friday, Oct. 23.

I went into Harriet's apartment this morning, after breakfast, expecting to find her there; but she was absent, upon some occasion or other, and had left her writing materials about upon the table. I saw something that looked like verse, with erasures;

erasures; and really concluding she had been trying her hand at an epitaph or an elegy on poor Sailor, I did not scruple to inspect the writing. I soon found it was not intended for communication; however, the lines pleased me so much, I could not resist the temptation of transcribing them, which offered itself. Her secret will be safe with you and me, my Edward; and should she destroy this production of her tender youthful muse, perhaps, hereafter, when completely cured of the wound, she may not be sorry that another copy has been preserved. The sentiment is so innocent, she surely can have no reason to be so; but you shall judge, for here it follows:

ELEGY.

That happy lot to me the fates deny,
To sooth thy sorrows with assiduous love;
Kiss off the tear that trembles in thine eye,
Or share the grief denied me to remove.

Mine,

Mine it is not to pluck the cruel thorn,
 That goads thy heart, and rankles in thy breast;
 Or, when of friends bereft—of hope forlorn,
 Hush on my bosom all thy cares to rest.

O'er the lone heath with thee I may not roam,
 And all thy pensive wand'ring's joy to share;
 Nor waiting thee to bless our humble home,
 With willing hands the frugal meal prepare.

I must not be thy tender nurse, nor friend,
 Nor watch thy glances all the live long day;
 To thy lov'd converse I must not attend,
 Ah! no, alas!—thrice happy she who may.

I was obliged to write the two last lines from memory; for I heard her step upon the stairs, and had but just time to make good my escape, running off, on tip-toe, like a thief, and shutting my room door as softly as possible, that she might not hear it; for I could not have forgiven myself, had I caused her the least painful blush. I believe, however, she had but taken like time to collect her papers before she followed me to my room. She looked a little uneasy. “I went down stairs,” said she,
 “to

“ to get a little vinegar to thin my ink : my aunt called me into the parlour, where I found Mr. Bertram and cousin Charlotte. My aunt went out—and cousin Charlotte kept pulling me to stay. I thought the man never would have gone; and I had left my writing things all about. I should not choose the maids to see them.—Have you heard them in my room, Ma’am?”—

“ No, my dear,” said I, “ I don’t think any body has been there but me; I went there to see after you, and invite you to walk; observing that you had been writing, I concluded you would not be long absent, and was about to prepare for a stroll, if you are so disposed.” “ With all my heart,” said she, assuming a more chearful air, “ I’ll get my things, and attend you directly.”

We directed our course towards the wood, discoursing, all the way, of the proposed epitaph to poor Sailor. We settled that

that each of us should try our talent separately, and prevail on Mr. Ewer to do the same; then to compare the efforts of our muse, and choose the best of the three, or select the best thought to work upon; as in our wisdoms we should agree. You see, my love, we treat it as a serious affair.

The leaves begin to fall apace, my Edward. A smart frost, last night, had loosened the slight tenure they yet held by, and they fell rustling about us, so as sometimes to make us start, and imagine some living creature near us. Alas! poor Sailor! At length, however, a little living creature did really appear; a pretty squirrel crossed the path before us as quick as thought, and sprang up a high tree, where, from his security, he sat and chattered at us. Harriet, extremely delighted with this adventure, recollected she had some nuts in her pocket, which she deposited

sited in a hollow of the tree. We then left the little sportive thing to enjoy his treasure, having remarked the spot, which was near some aged firs.

I tell you all my pastimes, my dear Edward, exactly as I should were you here, sometimes to share them. My chiefest and best entertainment, however, is thus to converse with thee.

Farewell for the present!—Harriet is just come to tell me that Mr. Ewer is below, and the family waiting tea for me.

Saturday, Oct. 24.

In consequence of a plan, settled last night, we are setting off to see a gentleman's house and grounds, about six or eight miles from hence.

Mr.

Mr. Ewer drives Mrs. Peterfon and me in the chaise; the rest of the party, that is to say, the family and Mr. Grove jun. go on horse-back. Harriet has Miss Grove's mare, the same she rode to the hunting.

Sunday, Oct. 25.

The weather proving favourable, we had a most agreeable day: the ride, indeed, was rather tedious; the road being so extremely bad, that we were several times obliged to alight, in order to escape disagreeable jolting and apprehensions.—We arrived, at length, at the park gate; where an old servant, who keeps the lodge, and has the liberty of making her place a little profitable, by entertaining company there, received us.—Here then we deposited

sited our basket of provender; and having partaken of some portion of it, with keen appetites, we set out together on our survey of the grounds.

It is a very sweet spot, eminently favoured by nature, and adorned by art, with equal taste and expence.

“Where Nature’s hand by art is deckt,

“And taste herself is architect.” SMART.

While some of the party went to see the house, the remainder, that is, Miss Anne, Harriet, Mr. Ewer, and I, strolled to a wood, at some distance, which appeared to bound the plantation, and which we preferred exploring; not having time for both, as we had heard the house contained nothing very curious or remarkable, we had reason to applaud our choice, for the wood was a perfect Arcadia,

dia, containing every beauty and every variety that the hand of taste and elegance could assemble; yet they say it is not large.

The winding walks are innumerable, no two resembling each other; and every one offering some beauty peculiar to itself. I shall attempt to describe but one, which, as it happened to be very consonant to my feelings, I cannot pass over. This was a winding path shaded intirely with evergreens, such as laurel, bay, laurustinas, and what is commonly called mock-myrtle. It led up an ascent, (a little difficult, and not so smooth to the foot as the others), to an alcove, where, embowered in shrubs of the same durable kind, mingled with real myrtle, with yellow and white everlasting flowers, the great amaranthus, &c. was a shrine of simple workmanship; with this only inscription, *To Fidelity*. The figure of a dog, of the spaniel

spaniel kind, admirably well-executed, supported the base.

We concluded it to be the monument of some faithful favourite ; and with a deep sigh to the memory of mine, I breathed a wish that it was in my power to bestow upon him so honourable a memorial. “ Now here is the very spot to compose,” said Mr. Ewer ; “ I really think if I was to remain here, I should be inspired.” “ With fidelity do you mean ?” said Miss Anne. “ With a verse or two in its praise, Madam,” answered he : “ or, in other words, of poor Sailor’s, Mrs. Willars’s friend and favourite.” We quitted this sweet, sequestered bower, with regret ; and turned into a wide path, shaded with lofty oaks and pines : here hares and squirrels sported very near us with little appearance of alarm ; we forgot how time slipped away, and that it was no longer summer. Miss Anne had just expressed a wish for some nuts that she
had

had discovered, rather out of her reach ; which Mr. Ewer hastened to bend down to her, when a loud hallooing brought us a little to recollection. After our first surprise, we presently recognised the sonorous pipe of Mr. T. Peterson, calling to us all by name. Why, sister ; why, cousin ; Mr. Ewer, Mrs. Willars, halloo ! Do you mean to play at hide and seek in the wood here all night ? Are you stealing the squire's hares and rabbits ? What the duce be you at ?" Mr. Ewer whistled in answer, and an echo repeating the sound ; it had the prettiest effect imaginable, it had a good one too ; for, by riveting us to the spot, where we were so amazed, Mr. Thomas easily found and joined us : whereas, had we rambled about in quest of him, we might have been an hour before we could have effected a meeting in these intricate paths.

Mr. Thomas hurried us along, grumbling all the way that we had made him lose his dinner ;—arrived at the lodge, we found the rest of the party had dispatched theirs—we swallowed a little very hastily ; for Mrs. Peterfon, in her terror of the bad roads, was in such haste to be gone, that she had already begun to pack up the basket. “ You may pick a bit on the way,” said she, “ only think what a road we have home ; I shall be frightened out of my wits to be dark.” We reminded her that there was a moon, and that our hostess had provided us a guide to lead us a better way : ’twas all in vain, we could obtain no delay. “ Come,” said she, stepping into the chaise, “ you’ll make the better supper.” I took a bit of bread in my hand, for the air had sharpened my appetite, and followed. We met with but little inconvenience on our return ; the road, by which we were conducted, proving very tolerable, and the
moon

moon soon rose bright enough to enable us to pick the best. Mr. Ewer, whom it reminded of the following poetical description of night, which, he said, he had read in a magazine, the author unknown, repeated it at my request, and copied it for me on our return.

A NIGHT SCENE.

From the lake grey vapours rise,
Wide their hov'ring banners spread;
Slow they wander through the skies,
And settle round the mountain's head.

Wheeling her car at night's pale noon,
Clad in majesty serene,
Bright ascends the full-orb'd moon,
And slowly clears the clouded scene.

Yon rock before the lovely ray,
Exalts his rugged brow to fight;
The joyful stars attend her way,
And skirt the wand'ring clouds with light.

Mute is the hill, the grove, the plain,
The echoing storm has ceas'd to roar;
No noise, save where the billowy main
Low murmurs to the distant shore.

This is the hour, the solemn hour,
When bards awake their sacred lays,
And hermits in the lonely bow'r,
Muse on their great Creator's praise.

I was much pleased with these lines, which had every advantage in Mr. Ewer's rehearsal of them. I have already told you, my Edward, that he has a particular excellence in repeating verse.—As I praised them very much, he said, “they contained an image, with which he was not perfectly satisfied—as he was doubtful whether it was true—that of the stars reflecting light upon the clouds. Can you perceive it,” added he, “yonder are several bright stars, and there are some clouds?” “I cannot distinguish,” said I, “whether that light does, or does not, proceed from the stars, in the superior lustre of the moon:—however, I have no inclination to detect the poet in a mistake, so much has his description in general prejudiced me in his favour. “*Rien n'est beau que le vrai, Madam,*” said Mr. Ewer.

Ewer. "At least," said I, "many things may be agreeable upon paper, that are not exactly true; or what is to become of the whole race of poets and romance writers. You remember Waller's answer to Charles the Second. I'm afraid such is the state of poor human nature, that many things are often found to be agreeable, because they are not true." "I agree with you, Madam, in some points," returned Mr. Ewer, "but you must allow, that in descriptions of nature, neither the poet nor the painter can be allowed to exaggerate; their works can be beautiful only, in proportion as they are conformable to truth." You will believe, Edward, I did not contest the observation. We chatted in this way 'till we reached home, without disturbing our companion, who slept very comfortably. We all spent the evening together, talking over the events of the day. I did not find that we lost much by not seeing the house; and the party who saw it, did not envy our

stroll to the wood. Thus all happily were satisfied. Adieu !

Tuesday 28.

Mr. Peterfon came home from his house of resort, the Plough, last night, a little merry, and very communicative. "I've got some news for you women folk, about Mr. Ewer," said he; "what will you give me for a bit of his history?" From curiosity or interest, all were attentive, and he related what follows:—Mr. P. always disposed to be sociable, and to share his cheering cup, met with a person at the Plough, which is situated on the road side, very much of his own disposition for conviviality; this was a rider, travelling for money and orders, who had stopt to bait his horse and refresh himself: he is described by Mr. P. as a man of universal knowledge,
great

great good sense, &c. &c. In short, they were taking their bottle together in a small parlour which overlooks the road, when Mr. Ewer, with a book in his hand, accidentally passed. "Sure I should know that man," said the rider; "yes! it is Mr. Ewer, an old neighbour of mine: pray, Sir, does he live in these parts?" Mr. P. answered, "that he had lodged at a farm-house in the neighbourhood, some months; that nobody knew who he was, and, till very lately, it was not known that he was married; that every body wondered what should bring him here; and, for his own part, though he did not trouble himself much about other people's business, he should be glad to know." The rider was very happy to have it in his power to oblige so civil a gentleman, and related the following particulars:—"I knew Mr. Ewer," said he, "when he was a merchant at Bristol; he was well respected, both in the trade and out of it; and though too

much a bookish man to apply very assiduously to business, and too much given to your fine feelings, and all that, to have much worldly wisdom, he carried on his affairs with honour and punctuality, and was thought to be doing very well. His house was exactly opposite to my mother's, who being left a widow in rather strait circumstances, let lodgings; her first floor was then occupied by a young widow lady, of extraordinary beauty; she appeared to be in genteel circumstances, having her woman and livery servant; paid well, observed great decorum in her conduct, and was reported to have a jointure of seven hundred a year. She went out but little, and saw no company, but usually employed herself reading or working at the window, with the blinds down, for the benefit of more light. Her opposite neighbour could not avoid seeing her, and was probably struck with her beauty, which certainly was very striking: it was not long before

before he found an opportunity of being introduced. As she was returning home one evening, rather late, and unattended, she was alarmed at some little bustle in the street, just as Mr. Ewer was passing by; he offered his assistance, which was accepted in the most interesting tremor imaginable she took his arm to support her tottering steps; and when arrived at my mother's, did not refuse his further aid to help her to ascend the stair-case. He waited of course till he saw her recovered; and did not retire till he had obtained leave to repeat his visits to enquire after her health. They soon became very frequent, and Mrs. Emmerson, for so was the lady called, having occasion to display her numerous attractions, easily secured her conquest. To make short of my story, my mother lost her lodger, and Mr. Ewer led her a willing bride to the altar, about six weeks after their first interview. She dismissed her attendant, and engaged my youngest sister,

to whom she took a fancy, to supply her place: it is from her I knew what follows. —The honey moon went on smoothly, and many succeeding ones. Mr. Ewer was a tender, kind, indulgent husband; and the lady, though she soon discovered a taste for gaiety and expence, not exactly coincident with his temper, a gentle and affectionate wife. After some time, introduced him her twin brother, who was just returned from the West-Indies, where he had been with his regiment: he was extremely like her in person, and their affection for each other was very great; but in such near relations it excited neither surprise nor alarm. Mr. Ewer had a country-house in Wales, where he often spent the summer months, and sometimes his affairs called him to London. It was observed that in his absence the Captain always came to keep his sister company, both in town and country; this however was not thought extraordinary, till my sister coming upon them

them unawares, was witness to some familiarities which fraternal affection could hardly justify. She whispered her observations about, and suspicions arose, which however never reached Mr. Ewer, till in one of his journies to London, entering accidentally into a coffee-house at the west end of the town, he heard one officer ask another after his brother-in-law by name. Sentry is with his sister at Bristol, or at her country house, said the other:—with his sister! returned the first, and how long has he had one? I know all his family as well as I do my own, and this is the first time I ever heard of either brother or sister that he had. I know no more than what he told me, returned the other: he is always going to see his sister, as he pretends. His sister, indeed! answered again the questioner; I'll wager 'tis his old mistress. He's none of those that would run after sisters, even if he had one." Mr. Ewer lost none of this conversation; it gave him inexpressible
M 6. alarm:

alarm; he made it his business, before he left London, to inquire after the family of his brother-in-law, and had soon reason to be but too well satisfied that he was an only son. He further learnt, from undoubted authorities, that he was an abandoned profligate; that the connection with his pretended sister was no secret; that he had made her an allowance during his absence, which was the jointure she boasted of, and which Mr. Ewer well knew had never been paid since their marriage.—Fraught with all this dreadful intelligence, he took post horses and returned to Bristol some days sooner than he was expected; it was late in the evening, and his lady and her brother were in the country; he changed horses, and arrived in the middle of the night. While he knocked for admittance, the Captain had just time to escape from Mrs. Ewer's room, but there were proofs enough that he had been there. Mr. Ewer would not see his faithless wife; he returned convinced

vinced of her perfidy, and his dishonour—gave up his business in despair; disposed of every thing to disadvantage; yet had the generosity to leave an annuity for his wife, whose worthless paramour, upon this discovery, had deserted her. It was not known whither Mr. Ewer had retired: and the rider added, there could be no doubt of his being rather straitened in his circumstances, as he had, in the hurry of his distress, disposed of his affairs so ill. His grief was in proportion to his attachment to his wife; which being very great, it was no wonder it had taken upon him so violent an effect.”

Each of our ladies was ready with her little observation upon this melancholy relation. Harriet alone was silent—her heart and eyes too full for utterance: one word would have betrayed how tenderly she was interested for the sufferer, which to avoid uttering, she speedily found a pretence to
leave

leave the room. I followed as soon as I could, and found her in tears, which she endeavoured to conceal. Without appearing to notice them, I said, "poor Mr. Ewer's is indeed a cruel case; yet I feel relieved through all my concern for him, to be convinced that he is really, as he assured us, an injured man; suffering for no fault of his own, for no crime at least:—for a marriage with a woman of whom he knew so little, was certainly an imprudence; and imprudence, my dear Harriet, is in this world often more severely punished than guilt. How cruel would have been the discovery, that a man so high in our opinion was undeserving of it! I know not any pang more cutting to a generous mind, than a disappointment of this sort. Friendship may a little while survive esteem; but how cruel is that interval! Oh! I had much rather find my friend to be him that suffers, than him that inflicts the injury." Chat of this kind relieved her, and she was soon

soon well enough recovered to bear her part in it.

This afternoon Mr. Ewer came to visit us; it was impossible to me not to feel more interested for him, by all I had heard of his sad story! Alas, poor sufferer! said I, to myself, how hard is thy lot—what is the absence, or even the death of a beloved object, in comparison with a conviction of its unworthiness. “Alas, poor sufferer!” methought, said Harriet,

“Mine it is not to pluck the cruel thorn,

“That goads thy heart and rankles in thy breast;

“Or when of friends betray’d, of hope forlorn,

“Hush on my bosom all thy cares to rest.”

However that might be, we both thought so much that we spoke hardly at all; while Mr. Ewer, as if understanding the silence of his sympathetic friends, made short answers to the questions of the other ladies, who were distracted to let him know, that they

they had gained some insight into his affairs, and, in spite of all their hints and innuendoes, took his station near us. "I have at length succeeded in procuring you a little walking mate, Mrs. Willars," said he, "will you condescend to accept a dog instead of an epitaph; my mind is too ill at ease to write poetry." So saying, he drew from his pocket a beautiful little puppy, of the shock kind:—though half unwilling to have any more *pets*, I felt my heart too much softened towards him to refuse his present. I thanked him; and the little animal, which is a lady, is settled in my good graces by the name of Sappho. Harriet has requested to have the nursing of it, and it is agreed that it is to remain in apartment till quite orderly and cleanly; by which means, Mrs. Peterfon's carpets and floors are out of danger, and every body well satisfied. Harriet brings me her nursing to kiss before she goes to rest: now, kiss it for Mr. Willars, she says.

Adieu,

Adieu, my love!—heaven blefs you. I would fend you a thoufand kifles if I could; but I had rather you came to fetch them yourfelf. Adieu.

Wednesday, 29.

Our poor Sally's grandmother has paid her debt to Nature, and left one, at leaft, of her family, in very deep affliction; which we have opportunity of obferving. — I heartily fympathize in this good girl's diftrefs, whose innate worth, and native elevation of fentiment, might adorn the beft education, and the moft elevated rank. — All her little earnings are devoted to the relief of her family; and though endowed by nature with fuch pretty features as might excufe a little pleafure in adorning them, fhe never allows herfelf any unneceffary ornament; but is always, though perfectly

perfectly neat, by far the plainest dressed of the three damsels which form our household establishment.

As she waits upon me, I have continual opportunities of observing her. I often talk to her, and am so pleased with her service, and the good disposition she discovers, that were we settled, my Edward, in peace and comfort, (as one day I hope we shall be,) I should be sorely tempted to a breach of one of the commandments—to covet my neighbour's servant; however, I would qualify it as a good relation of mine used to do, when tempted to desire the good things of another, by wishing, if she were mine, that the owner had a better.

Thursday.

Thursday, 30.

Ah, my dear Edward! how tedious is expectation.—I fancied it had been several months since last I heard from you; and, on looking over my journal, I find it is not quite one. Oh! could I but hear of you once a month; could I but give you tidings of my existence once in two!

Harriet is gone to M—with her cousins, to the ball, and to spend a few days, much against her inclination—not that, in this instance, she was at all constrained, but her cousins seemed to desire her company; and she has so little selfishness about her, that she is always ready to prefer the inclinations of others to her own.

Very much out of spirits myself, and in no disposition to be amused by any of our neighbours, I have, however, done something

thing almost as meritorious, in suffering myself to be led by Mrs. Peterfon, much against my will, on a visit to Miss Grove. My virtue was rewarded; for we found company, and spent the evening very agreeably. I saw, for the first time, a young man who does the duty of the parish, but usually resides at M—. Mr. Ewer was likewise there, and two of the fair maids of the mill.

We talked a little of books; and Mr. Ewer said, he was reading a new work, in French, called *Les Chevaliers du Lygne*. I have seen it, said the young parson, but read no farther than the ghost; when once I found it meant as really such. A ghost, in this enlightened age, is quite an insult upon the understanding. You were in the right, Sir, said Mr. Ewer, to proceed no further, if you have an objection to chimeras; for the author treats, throughout her work, of heroism, disinterested friendship,

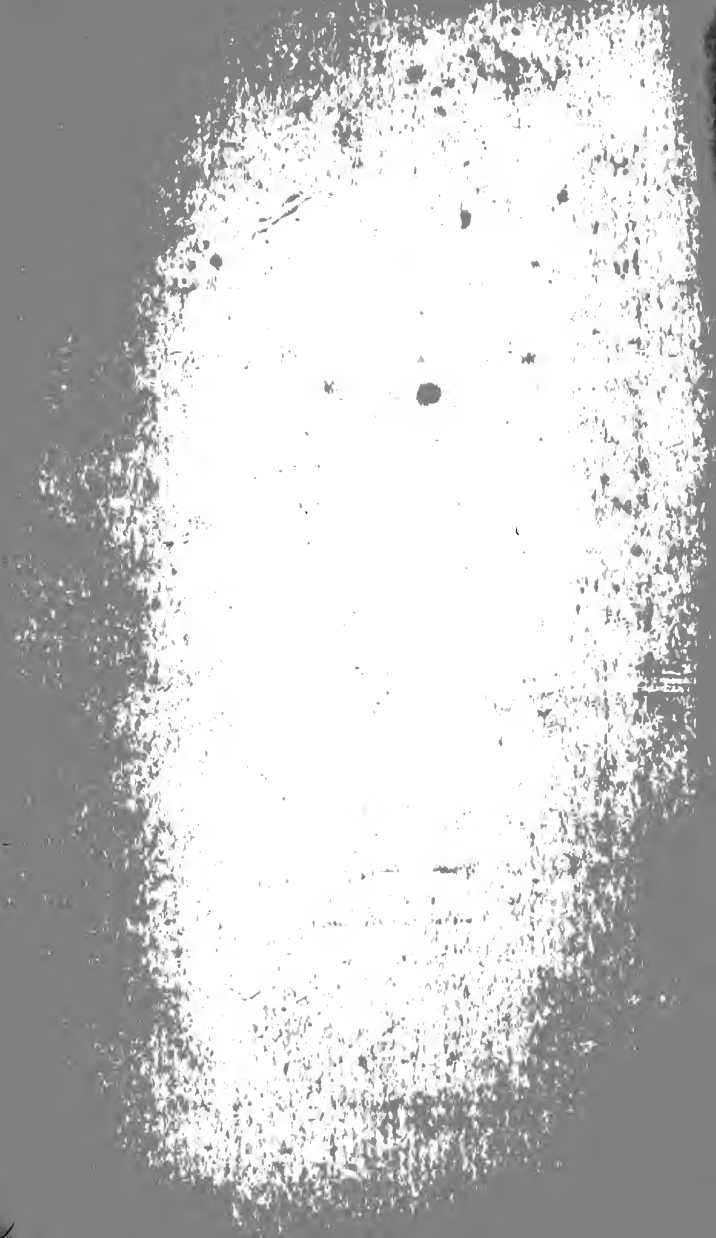
ship, high honour, generous constant love, and many such strange things; as, in the enlightened age, have as little existence as spirits. I thought it was very romantic and absurd, said Mr. Valance, the curate.

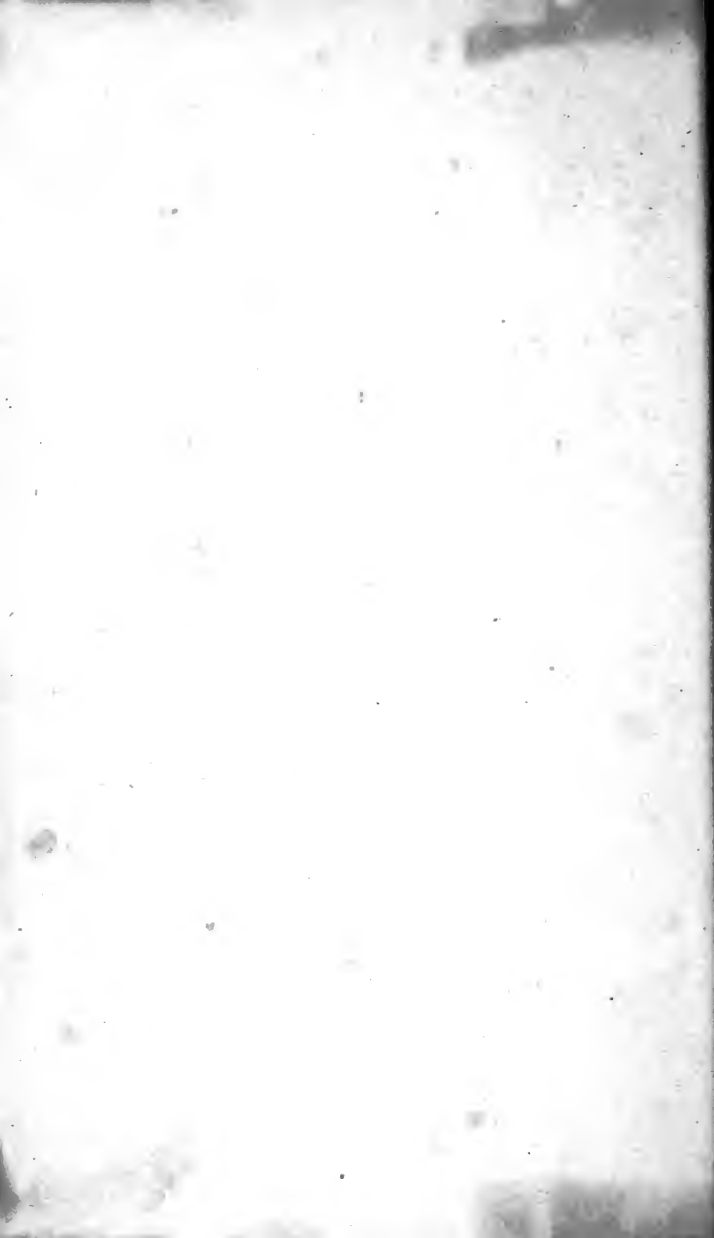
What do you understand by romance, Mrs. Willars? said Mr. Ewer, addressing himself to me. I understand, said I, virtues out of the reach and the comprehension of common minds, such as you have just named; not, however, the madness of love, or of bravery; but, I assure you, I am very romantic myself, and would not give much for any body, as my friend, that was not a little so. We are agreed, said he—the romance of love, is sense refined into sentiment; the romance of friendship, is a generous attachment, whether to persons of the same or of another sex, refined from all view of interest or self; the romance of honour, is that much abused word, in its true sense; that delicacy of
virtue

virtue which, far from allowing what probity would forbid, forbids much that probity might allow.—The rigid virtue of enlarged minds, of nice consciences, of elevated ranks, were they as they should be, all this is romance. Then, returned I, you will lend me the book, that I may read it in Harriet's absence.

He would have brought it me before he had done with it himself; but that I absolutely refused. I am to have it, however, in a day or two.

END OF VOL. I.







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